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THE NEW REPUBLIC

August 15, 1981

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TRB®

from Washington
August 15, 1981

Cloudy Forecast

Ronald Reagan is tougher, bolder, and more dogmatic than I expected, and more of an ideologue. He really believes you can curb bureaucrats, turn problems back to the states, and aid the poor by giving tax breaks to the rich. There is a lull in Washington now with Congress in recess and the president away, and there is a chance to think things over after the first six months. Reagan has had a triumph. Once again critics have underestimated him. He nonplussed most of us by getting his extraordinary economic program through Congress. Now all he has to do is make it work.

I couldn't take the Kemp-Roth program seriously when it was presented to Congress (and rejected) three years ago as an amendment to a Carter tax cut. Carter wanted to favor low-income people but Congress made the tax cut bigger and gave more plums to the rich. Jack Kemp, Republican of New York, offered an amendment for a 33 percent tax cut over the next three years. Democrats turned it down. Later the Republicans grabbed the whole thing. They staged a political blitz across the country for the 1978 midterm campaign. They shocked conservative Republican economists. But ex-president Jerry Ford bought the idea and Ronald Reagan said that if he tried for the presidency, he would run on a Kemp-Roth platform. It was all simple: if you restored incentive by cutting taxes (particularly those of the rich in order to supply investment capital), business would spurt. You could tell by the Laffer curve just how large a cut was needed. Republicans captured 12 House seats with that program. And in 1980 Reagan named the personable Kemp to his campaign staff as tax spokesman. George Bush, another presidential aspirant (and now vice president) called the whole thing "voodoo economics." President Carter's acceptance speech at the Democratic convention called it "the biggest tax giveaway in history."

So now here we are and it's the law. It has changed a lot since then, of course, and revenue cuts have been added to the tax cuts, but in essence it's the same: the Kemp-Roth three-year approach under which, as Reagan told the nation exultantly on TV July 27, "Starting next year the deficits will get smaller until in just a few years the budget can be balanced." In fairness I should say that one thing more has been added, as untried a doctrine in its way as Kemp-Roth: monetarism. That is the thing Margaret Thatcher is using in England to restore prosperity. It means that money and credit should be restricted to keep down inflation. Nobody doubts that if the Fed keeps the money and credit supply tight, it has an anti-inflationary effect. That's what the Fed has been doing and the rate of inflation has actually slowed. The problem is the mix. How far should you go? Already it has nearly ruined the US automobile and housing industries, sending the cost of borrowing money to 20 percent or more. You can always buy lower prices by having a recession. Some think that's where we're headed now.

Are these various radical White House programs contradictory? Reagan left Washington in a mood of euphoria. The boldness and success of his gamble so far can't be gainsaid. Can you stimulate the economy by tax cuts and arms expenditures on one side and dampen it on the other by reducing Social Security and killing things like the Public Service Employment Program that once offered 300,000 jobs? Do these balance the budget "in a few years"?

I find doubts everywhere. "The Fed is engaging in a dangerous economic experiment," says the careful forecasting group, Data Resources Inc., under Otto Eckstein. *Business Week* sees a recession. *Newsweek* thinks the program "exposes the economy to great risks." *Time* says the experiment is based "on the untried 'supply side' theories that were rejected two years ago even by the Hill's senior Republicans." The *Wall Street Journal* headline after the Kemp-Roth triumph read, "Uncertain Outlook," and the *Journal* found the results "very cloudy." Quotations from economists weren't very encouraging either, and the stock market pouted and the bond market sulked. Would the affluent beneficiaries of Kemp-Roth now invest their money (as hoped) or spend it casually? Would they do the right thing by the Laffer curve? At this point everybody must hope that the Reagan triumph is justified, for there is an immense stake involved at home and abroad in seeing if supply-side economics works, and whether prosperity trickles down.

After living with Reagan for six months we have recognized that he is a bolder and more doctrinaire man than expected, and one who tries to put his doctrines to work. He seems quite certain, for example, that the federal government can be shrunk. For a reporter who has watched Washington get bigger and bigger and seen rural, city, national, and international problems crowd into it for a long time, the Reagan view seems fanciful and even artless. He abides by it with fervor, however, just as he does Kemp-Roth. He has taken Jefferson off the wall and put up a picture of Calvin Coolidge, and his favorite quotation in recent speeches is from Coolidge's address at Williamsburg in 1926, attacking bureaucrats and declaring: "No plan of centralization has ever been adopted which did not result in bureaucracy, tyranny, inflexibility, reaction and decline." It sounds good, but can you build modern policy on it? Coolidge had an easy time of it with his afternoon naps and the greatest six years of prosperity in history, but the Coolidge boom turned into the Hoover crash. It transformed the role of the federal government.

Reagan has other firm beliefs and will gamble on them. He rejects a federal role to guide wages and prices—it must be left to the marketplace. Washington spends too much on social projects, he believes, and it would be better to turn them back to cities and states. He believes that Russia provokes problems around the world, and will retreat only if awed by military power.

Reagan is not reticent about asserting these things. Advisers are worried about his candid comments at press conferences. In his first he declared of the Soviets "that they reserve unto themselves the right to commit any crime." In June he scorned federal welfare programs. "They failed," he said flatly. "The only people that prosper from them is that large bureaucracy that administers them."

Reagan has strong conservative beliefs, a powerful appeal to the public, and a willingness to take risks. We wait now to see if one of these risks pays off.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

August 15, 1981

The New Gilded Age

With the easy victory of his tax plan in the House, President Reagan has put in place the elements of what is being called by some a revolution and by others a counterrevolution. In fact it is something simpler and less exalted than either of these; it is reaction. The marriage of economic wealth and political power has been solemnized anew, and, for the time being, no man can put it asunder. That marriage had never quite gone on the rocks, but it did undergo long periods of legal separation, beginning with the advent of the New Deal; and even when Republican presidents held office there was general acknowledgment that it was a faintly sinful union. When Charles E. Wilson, Eisenhower's secretary of defense, announced that what was good for General Motors was good for the country, there was a national scandal. It's hard to imagine such a remark stirring up much of a fuss today. In the light of the new mood, the intermittent social consciousness of the last 40 years suddenly looks anomalous. Under the Reagan dispensation, shame is banished, greed enshrined, and the political supremacy of private wealth celebrated as frankly as it was in the Gilded Age.

Reagan ended the technically proficient speech that sealed his tax victory (see Washington Diarist, page 42) with the venerable "two roads" formulation. The bad road leads to government telling you "how you should conduct your life," the good road "promises to renew the American spirit." All very stark. But in fact the two roads weren't so distinct. The one the Democrats laid out wasn't much more than a bicycle path along the route of the Reagan Freeway. So the congressional leaders who went on television to answer the president were hard put to make a case against his plan. "It is clearly an experimental plan," said Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey. "It gambles with the only economy we have." True enough. But the Democratic alternative was only a lower-stakes version of the same gamble; and by counseling caution, Bradley inadvertently confirmed the emotional logic of Reagan's appeal ("One road is timid and fearful, the other bold and hopeful").

The Democratic bill was unquestionably fairer to the great majority of taxpayers. It would have cut everyone's income tax by roughly the same percentage, whereas the Reagan plan, which makes percentage cuts not in tax payments but in tax rates, is more heavily weighted to favor the higher brackets. But the real fight had been lost well before the vote. It was lost when the Democrats made their decision to embrace the basic Reagan theology of economic salvation through big multiyear bucks for the already flush. Rostenkowski & Co. tried to arm themselves with shiny new tax breaks for oil *rentiers*, commodity speculators, and heiresses, but these are not weapons that Democrats know how to aim. They were inevitably destined to fall into the hands of the enemy. What had

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been billed as the climactic battle turned out to be a mop-up operation. The 194 Democrats who held ranks had to content themselves with watching Reagan shoot the ideologically wounded.

The president emphatically stated the heart of his position when, in his tax speech, he presented his view of "what this whole controversy comes down to: are you entitled to the fruits of your own labor or does government have some presumptive right to spend and spend and spend?" A *New York Times* reporter found a fuel-oil dealer in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, who echoed this thought even more pithily: "What I make I want to keep for myself, instead of paying it to the government." The philosophical basis of this position is profoundly, and dangerously, antisocial. It posits the market as the only irreducible and fully legitimate social reality, and regards other social structures, including democratic political institutions, as parasitic encumbrances. In truth, the fuel-oil dealer, like everyone else, does not "make" what he has; what he has is allocated to him by a vast web of economic, social, and political arrangements, of which his individual efforts are a part but by no means the decisive part. "The taxing power of government. . . must not be used to regulate the economy or bring about social change," the president said in his February address to a joint session of Congress. He genuinely seems to believe this; yet his actions utterly contradict it. His tax program is designed expressly to influence economic behavior, which is to say, to regulate the economy; and that program's deliberate promotion of inequality will engineer "social change" just as surely as progressive taxation was once intended to do—albeit in the opposite direction.

The Democrats perhaps can be forgiven their lackluster performance so far. Under Eisenhower, Nixon, and Ford, they were as much the administration's junior partners as they were its opponents. Reagan is a different kind of Republican, and the Democrats can serve themselves and the country only by becoming an authentic opposition party. That is a new role for them, but in time they will learn to play it. In the meantime, the only certain result of the Reagan tax and budget package will be a transfer of resources from the comparatively poor to the comparatively rich. That it will achieve an economic recovery which benefits everybody is uncertain, even improbable. Its impact is likelier to be far less pleasant. The tax cut means the administration must find an additional $60 billion between now and 1984, in the form either of budget cuts, which would rend the social and educational fabric of the country, or of high deficits, which would collide with a restrictive monetary policy to produce ever higher interest rates, recession, and mass suffering.

The last great wave of public innovation in this country came in the 1960s, and was the result of Sputnik as much as of Watts. It stemmed from a recognition that there are social and even economic goods (such as education, basic research, medical care, and urban peace) that the private market is ill equipped to provide. The successes of those years were real, and so were its failures and superfluities. The Reagan reaction makes no distinction between the two; but after it has run its course, its successors at least will have the advantage of being able to start from the ground up. The next wave of social construction, we hope, will be less "programmatic" and more structural, less palliative and more truly radical. It is far from certain that the wave will come soon, or that when it comes it will be equal to its task. What is beyond doubt is that the country first will have to relearn the lesson that it cannot rely on the random by-products of private wealth to meet its public needs.

Remembering General Torrijos.

Ode to Omar

Senator Howard Metzenbaum had traveled all the way to Panama, and he didn't intend to mince words. "General Torrijos, I must tell you in all candor that neither I nor my constituents like dictators." Torrijos puffed on his cigar, and replied: "Neither do I."

General Omar Torrijos, who ruled and cajoled Panama for 13 years and died on July 31 when his plane crashed en route to his favorite mountain village, was no ordinary "maximum leader." When his daughter, for whom he cared deeply, returned from school and told him that other students had made fun of her and called her father a dictator, he consoled her. But in telling the story later, he winked and said of the students: "They were right." Later, Torrijos confided to me that he wasn't a dictator. And he wasn't. And he was. And that was true about a lot of things people said about him.

Torrijos was a soldier and a populist, a prankster but also a serious and reflective man, a skilled political operator but also a romantic, practically a revolutionary in spirit, a friend of Marxists and businessmen (both served in his cabinet), a modest man who was often tempted by geopolitical ambitions. Torrijos was as singular as Panama's currency, which Panamanians call the Balboa and Americans call the dollar. No one in Panama's history ever showed more political astuteness in balancing the idealism of its radical youth and the conservatism of its commercial community. He could fake right and go left, feint left and go right, with equal dexterity. But he was no mere opportunist. Despite the most bloodshot eyes in Panama, Torrijos had a clear vision of the purposes of his politics: to integrate the nation geographically, and to integrate its

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Correspondence

Silent Cheers

To the editors:

May I offer a few sad, silent cheers for Stanley Kauffmann's comments on American film ("Muppets and Other Capers," *TNR*, July 18)? I too have bemoaned the failure of virtually all new commercially distributed films to deal with present-day American problems and realities. In the past decade only a handful come to mind: *The Great Santini*, *The Deer Hunter*, *Five Easy Pieces*, *The King of Marvin Gardens*, *Harlan County, USA*, and *Badlands*, to name a few. The best offense against the situation is of course to try not to attend any film that even vaguely hints at carrying on this tradition, and for reviewers not to review such films at all.

Fortunately, there is still a tremendous number of excellent, reality-oriented, current-awareness films being made as documentaries, many in 16mm. A few hours at the American Film Festival will reassure any true film lover that the art and conscience of filmmaking are alive and well. But what well-known film reviewer ever discusses such films as *Quilts in Women's Lives*, *Balloon Safari*, or *The Red Deer*? No television programming will ever replace the joys of seeing a good film, but there can be no doubt that, except for four or five large cities or university campuses, any night's fare on TV is likely to offer more of interest to the serious image-watcher than the local theaters.

Paul B. Wiener
State University of New York at Stony Brook
Long Island, New York

Dorothy Day

To the editors:

I was delighted with Robert Coles's fine tribute to Dorothy Day ("Reconsideration: Dorothy Day," *TNR*, June 6). And I am pleased to report that we have just reissued her autobiography, *The Long Loneliness*, in a new paperback edition, with an introduction by Daniel Berrigan. (The article said that the book was out of print.) In fact, Coles's piece itself makes an ideal introduction to the book and her life.

We will also be publishing William D. Miller's *Dorothy Day: A Biography*, a full-scale account of her life and times, in late fall.

John Loudon
Harper & Row
San Francisco, California

Dangerous battlefronts

To the editors:

Charles Krauthammer ("The Humanist Phantom," *TNR*, July 25) evidently assumes he has profoundly critiqued secular humanism as he charges the humanist movement with "benign eccentricities," "slightly crackpot secular millenarianism," "naive affirmation of faith in science . . ," maintaining a "creed one might expect of a socially conscious, passionately naive microbiology major."

Humanists believe that science can offer more authentic knowledge of the universe than can metaphysics. We accept that ethics are bound to the human experience and must be understood from this perspective, rather than maintained from ancient books and self-appointed moral dogmatists. This is naive?

Krauthammer's alternative to secular humanism is a call for that great abstraction: societal "religious sensibility." He believes that a "decline in spirituality" leads to "social pathology." His canon is derived from the jeremiads of Solzhenitsyn. His conclusions place him in the company of those two great preachers of the 19th century, Dwight Moody and Jerry Falwell (although he might deny such companionship).

As events are shaping now, we secular humanists find ourselves facing two battlefronts. We must contend with the fanatical rantings of the evangelical right with their hard dogma. The other front is as dangerous because it is as ultimately irrational. It is the liberal theist with his soft dogma and faithful assertions about "unsecular man."

Jerry Wayne Borchardt
Dallas, Texas

To the editors:

Charles Krauthammer's "The Humanist Phantom" gives intelligent voice to the ancient doctrine of the middle way and it is welcomed. However, I have reservations about the final paragraph, and particularly about the claim that "restoring these [communal] values is a task secularists and skeptics should address." The phrases seem to ignore the connection spoken of by Chesterton and Solzhenitsyn between values and religion. Law, politics, and culture cannot create, they can only embody and transmit the values already held by men. Dostoevsky said, "Without God, all things are permitted." Where law, politics, and culture have only human and not divine authority, there is no more reason to adopt this particular human's values than that one's, this secularist's dogma than that preacher's. The real war is not between this man's values and that man's. It is between those who, in pride, would establish values and those who, in humility, would accept them. And in that war there is no middle path.

Gideon Rappaport
State University of New York
Cortland, New York

To the editors:

Charles Krauthammer makes a serious error in "The Humanist Phantom" by arguing that a lack of belief "in a supernatural order" leads to a decline "in moral standards." He is mistaken in claiming that in ancient Greece "the civic and moral virtue" of Pericles, Plato, and Aristotle was dependent on respect for the gods. As for our present situation, would Krauthammer find more "civic and moral virtue" in the moral majority who emphasize the belief in a "supernatural order" than in those Americans who, while treating such a belief "with condescension if not contempt," nevertheless support freedom of speech and religion, racial equality, and a commitment to making our government act for the general welfare? In fact, as John Stuart Mill pointed out more than a century ago, a dependence on the supernatural weakens, rather than strengthens, man's efforts to improve himself and society.

Krauthammer may be right in reminding us that the humanist and liberal tradition has had "an insufficient appreciation of man's capacity for evil and, therefore, of the dangers of absolute freedom." Perhaps John Dewey, Norman Thomas, and others like them, with their belief in progress, were not prepared for the horrors of Hitler and

(continued on page 39)

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poor and rural areas economically and politically.

To his friends, Omar was the nearest thing Latin America had to a leprechaun. He brought the same kind of energy he devoted to the canal treaties to the most unusual "missions"—from gaining John Wayne's endorsement to the treaties ("And he's a helluva better actor than Reagan, too," Torrijos noted); to persuading Patty Hearst to spend her honeymoon on Cantadora Island, the site of the Canal negotiations; to liberating Isabel Perón (once a Panamanian dancer); to doing a favor for his friend Jimmy Carter by taking in the shah and his entourage ("Imagine that," he mused, "2,500 years of the Persian Empire reduced to ten people and two dogs").

HE HAD a low regard for the political party system he overthrew and discarded in 1968, viewing it as corrupt and serving the narrow interests of the wealthy in Panama City. He enlisted some of Panama's most talented young technocrats—people like Nicholas Barletta, his finance minister and currently a vice president of the World Bank—to reorient the government to help meet the economic, health, and especially the educational needs of the poor in the urban and rural areas. The son of schoolteachers, Torrijos said he believed not in the class struggle but the classroom struggle.

Torrijos's real mission, however, was to unite Panama—to erase the ten-mile-wide strip of Americana that divided his country in half. He was of two minds about how to do it. The romantic in him wanted to liberate the zone, and he later told me that this was the path Panama would have followed if Ronald Reagan had won the nomination and election in 1976. He expected that Reagan would have blocked real negotiations and that violent incidents would have been impossible to prevent. The extreme left, he knew, would exploit the violence. "They will start their own fires to gain their own goals," he said. "Three hundred thousand Latin Americans would be raising the anti-Yankee banner as they raised it when the Americans went in to fight Sandino [in Nicaragua]. . . . If I had historical vanity, I would have gone more for Sandino's place than for the real solution of our problem."

But he never let his romantic side carry him away. "I do not delude myself. . . . Through a war . . . there would be mourning in Panamanian homes. And hate, a profound feeling of hate for the US." So, with Jimmy Carter, he chose the road of negotiation and compromise. The leftists in Panama wanted the US military out immediately. He accepted the year 2000: a nice round number. And then he went around the leftists by gaining the approval of Castro and the Mexicans. "I am satisfied," he said on the eve of the canal-signing ceremony in September 1977. "We now have to walk for 23 years with a pebble in our shoes, but that's the price we have to pay for getting the dagger out of our heart. I did not concede any more than I can sell to my people." In fact, the treaties passed just as narrowly in Panama as they did in the United States.

The Senate debate was hard to swallow. The DeConcini amendment contradicted the very purpose of the treaty by demanding a unilateral and unrestricted right to intervene in Panama's internal affairs. The treaty wasn't worth the price. "Listening to DeConcini," Torrijos said, "I ask myself the question: have we by any chance lost a war? The US didn't demand as much from Japan." In the final stage of re-negotiating that amendment to fit the original spirit of the treaties, Senator Robert Byrd asked Panama's ambassador extraordinaire, Gabriel Lewis, to check the new language with Torrijos. The reply was vintage Torrijos: if Byrd, as captain of the ship, could safely bring it into port, Torrijos would make sure that the pier would be in the right place to meet it.

Because Jimmy Carter recognized the justice of Panama's claim, and Torrijos knew that he did, the practical side of Omar Torrijos prevailed, and the Panamanians, once again, are our closest friends in the Americas. Opponents of the treaties said that Torrijos was a Marxist, that if we gave up the canal he would turn Panama into another Cuba and give the canal to the Soviets. Their vision was narrow and wrong, but if their strategy of rejecting the treaties had prevailed it could very well have made their predictions come true.

Since the ratification of the treaties, however, Panama has moved to the center economically and politically. The left lost the only issue it could use to broaden its base and tilt the country. Today Panama is a nation with an identity, a major banking center of Latin America, and an island of stability in a turbulent Central America. That is Torrijos's legacy. Whether Panama's talented young president, Aristides Royo, can expand on that legacy and make democracy work, will depend in part on whether Omar's last mission—to reform the National Guard and keep it out of politics—succeeds. The question is whether the guard follows his instructions or his example.

A footnote. One of the conservative arguments against the treaties was that if we gave in to Panamanian demands for the zone, their demands would escalate, and soon they would try to throw out the US military. Again, the opposite happened. Military cooperation has become so close that last August, Torrijos accepted a parachute jump exercise 70 miles west of the canal by the 82d Airborne. He set only one condition: reciprocity. And so the same day, a Panamanian airborne company parachuted into Fort Bragg. "It was," Torrijos said with evident pride, "the first time Latin Americans ever practiced an invasion of the US."

Robert Pastor

Robert Pastor was the National Security Council staff member for Latin America and the Caribbean during the Carter administration. He is now working on a book about US policy toward Latin America.

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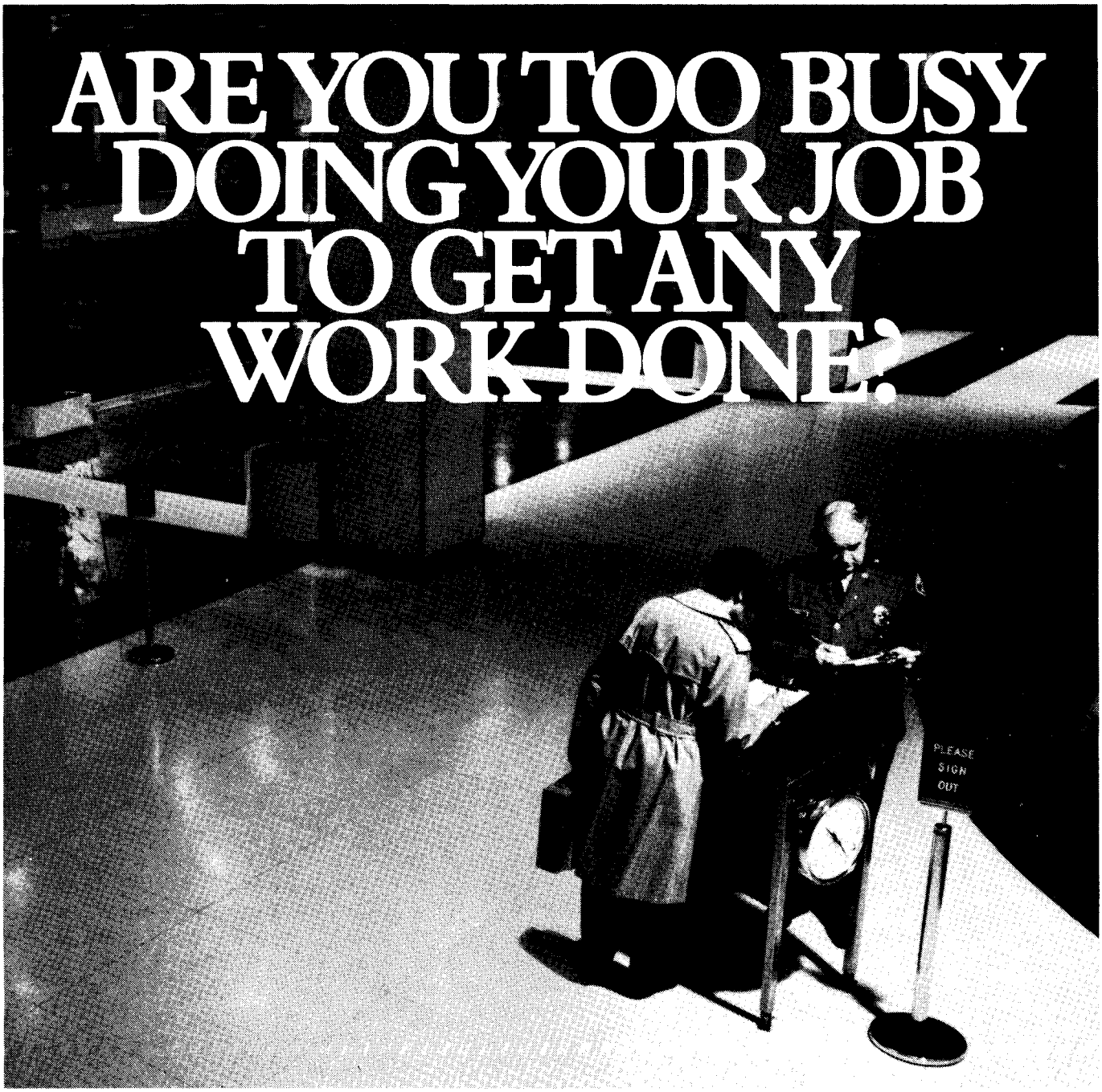

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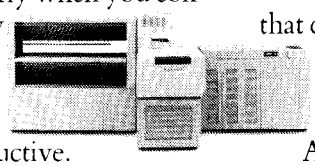

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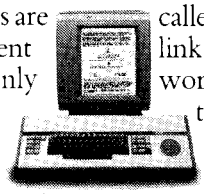

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White House Watch

Now the Tough One

After witnessing Ronald Reagan turn around federal economic policy in six months flat, one hesitates to say he can't make peace in the Middle East, too. But beating Dan Rostenkowski and Tip O'Neill is a game of patty-cake compared to generating a settlement between Menachem Begin and, say, Hafiz Assad. Reagan was not elected overwhelmingly by the people of the Middle East, and he can't use his communications skills to create pressure on their leaders. The Arabs and Israelis may yearn for peace as much as Americans do for economic well-being, but they want it on their own terms—and those terms are not just different in a Republican-Democrat sort of way, but mutually and multiply exclusive by ideology, nationality, religious enthusiasm, personality, geographical location, and intensity of fear and hatred. Most serious of all, Ronald Reagan and his subordinates had a clear idea of what they wanted in economic policy, but in Middle East policy they don't, and the whole region knows it.

The Israelis and most Arab leaders want and expect American intervention to help them settle their troubles, but they are not sure what form the intervention will take and what its aims will be. Arriving at the White House for his visit with President Reagan, Anwar Sadat said he was confident the US would act as a "full partner" in the peace process, but he sounded more hopeful than certain. At the Israeli embassy, one official said that "so far, we have seen no strategy from this administration, only tactics, and in some cases, only tricks." An American with good connections in Egypt asked, "What is this administration's interpretation of UN Resolution 242, for example? Does Israel basically have to go back to the 1967 borders, with minor adjustments? They haven't thought about it. They've been too busy putting out fires, and the president's been too preoccupied with other things." An American with good Saudi connections said that "originally, there was a simplistic policy of 'strategic consensus,' along with the 'Jordanian option' for the West Bank. Both aborted. I hope I see a small glimmer of a policy developing out of the Lebanon negotiations, but I can't say there is one."

Administration officials protest that a Mideast policy does exist, resting on the pillars of "strategic consensus" and "peace process." Indeed, there are two policies. Under the first, the administration is increasing its arms sales to friendly countries in the region and upgrading our own military presence, all in order to build confidence and ultimately bind Israel and the moderate Arabs more tightly to us (and to each other) in a mutual effort to thwart Soviet expansionism. This was to have been the major thrust of our Mideast policy until Secretary of State Alexander Haig went out to the region in April and was told it wasn't enough. Now the administration also plans efforts to reduce the enmity between Israel and the Arabs.

But having two policies—really, one policy and one vague good intention—does not make a strategy. It hasn't been decided how the US will try to make peace (resume the stalled West Bank-Gaza autonomy talks, yes, but on what basis?) and the administration has no conception yet of which line of policy takes precedence and how they interact. In some cases, they clearly conflict, as with the decision to sell AWACS to Saudi Arabia. It's an ego-builder for the Saudis, making them first in the neighborhood to have one of the world's most sophisticated electronic gadgets. It may even be militarily useful, giving them early warning of Iraqi or South Yemeni attacks. However, it has the Israelis furious, because the plane also can look into Israeli air space. So now the administration has a huge fight on its hands in Congress this fall, probably starting on September 9, just after Menachem Begin concludes his state visit to the US. The administration will try to win support in Congress by assuring that restrictions will be placed on Saudi use of the planes, but the more talk there is about those restrictions, the more the Saudis will be angered at the offense to their dignity and sovereignty. Having both sides angry at us will not help the cause of peace.

THE ISRAELIS already are angry over the administration's delay in delivering their ten F-16 jet fighters after the raids on Iraq's nuclear reactor and PLO headquarters in Beirut. It may seem a small penalty to hold up ten planes after the Israelis have killed 300 innocent civilians, but the Israelis say that an important precedent has been broken here. "Even in the depths of the 1975 reassessment," said one Israeli diplomat, "only negotiation for new equipment was stopped. What was contracted for beforehand was delivered." During Henry Kissinger's reassessment, too, this diplomat said, "the US knew what it was twisting our arms for. It wanted to get us out of the Sinai passes and achieve a new interim agreement with Egypt. It was a well put-together plan with an objective and a timetable. This [the F-16 suspension] was a reflexive reaction. The administration was under pressure from the Saudis, the Europeans, and others, and they got into a mess. They used the ultimate weapon and they don't know what they want in return. They'll have to lift the suspension. They've created bad blood and doubts in Israel and doubts in the Arab world about how far the US will support Israel."

There's apparently more ill feeling over Washington's obvious hope that Begin would be defeated in the recent Israeli elections. The administration refused to invite Begin for a visit this spring and spurned Israel's proposal for resumption of the autonomy talks prior to the election. Begin is said to take all this personally, and Israeli diplomats say it may affect how forthcoming he is with the US and Sadat over autonomy talks. "He

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drawing by Vint Lawrence for *The New Republic*

may feel he doesn't owe them a thing since he won the election," said one Israeli official. Reagan aides also have demonstrated concern about connections between Begin's personal feelings and high diplomacy. When Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger and Deputy Secretary of State William Clark criticized Begin late last month over the Beirut bombing, the White House repudiated both statements in order to salvage delicate negotiations leading to a ceasefire in Lebanon.

The ceasefire is the administration's one major diplomatic accomplishment in the Mideast. And, although no one should minimize it, the ceasefire so far stands merely as a tactical victory—and a shaky one at that. Israelis say it could fly apart easily, possibly with a PLO attack on an Israeli target outside the Mideast, for which Israel might stage a retaliatory attack in Lebanon. Some pro-Arab observers think that Begin and his new defense minister, Arik Sharon, are itching for a chance to invade and seize southern Lebanon, driving out or massacring PLO forces and then holding a new territory to bargain over.

There is a small chance, but only the smallest, that Ambassador Philip Habib's ceasefire could be expanded into a wider diplomatic movement toward peace. The US did establish close connections with Saudi Arabia, which acted as intermediary with the PLO, and this has led some observers to hope for indirect talks on larger issues. "I would like to think that the administration has been opening channels, building vessels, into which policy could be poured," said one American close to the Saudis. But the obstacles are great, including the continued presence of Syrian missiles in Lebanon, Israel's demand for a Syrian withdrawal, the inability of the Lebanese government to exercise sovereignty over its own territory, and the conflicting aims of Lebanese Christians and Moslems, Syrians, Palestinians, and Israelis.

Besides White House preoccupation with domestic policy, the holdup in development of a comprehensive Mideast strategy is due to internal conflict in the administration which apparently hasn't begun to be resolved. President Reagan himself is widely regarded, probably correctly, as a "gut Zionist." He heard things only Israel's way during much of his career in Hollywood, took consistently pro-Israeli positions as California governor and as a presidential candidate, likes Israel's pluck and anti-Sovietism, and hasn't much knowledge of or sympathy for Arabs. He's said the Palestinians represent a refugee problem and has characterized the PLO as a pro-Soviet terrorist group. However, Reagan has been undergoing a crash course in Mideast problems in connection with the Habib mission and his meetings with Sadat, Begin, Jordan's King Hussein, and Saudi crown prince Fahd. "He may not have thought the Palestinians were important before now," said one administration official, "but he will when Fahd, etc., get through with him." On the very day of the crucial House vote on Reagan's tax bill, the president spent 45 minutes with Saudi prince Bandar ibn Sultan, son of the country's defense minister, to discuss Lebanon and other issues. Even some Israelis express concern at the attention being lavished on the Saudis by the Reagan administration, and an American close to the royal family said that "the president's personal activism in all this is greater than anybody knows or would suspect."

Reagan presumably is also getting strong pro-Saudi advice from Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, who is said to believe that Arab oil, not Israel, represents America's key strategic interest in the Middle East. Weinberger and Reagan are old friends, so it's likely that the Pentagon chief can get the president to listen on subjects other than strictly defense issues. One pro-Israel lobbyist in Washington says that "the

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Bechtel oil group, including Weinberger, is further to the Arabist side than the traditional State Department Arabists." Weinberger formerly was a top official of the Bechtel Corporation, a giant construction company which does extensive business in Saudi Arabia. This same lobbyist said, though, that "Weinberger may push the Palestinian line on Reagan, but it's not out of sympathy or humanitarianism, as it was with Jimmy Carter. He thinks there's an opening for the Soviets with the Palestinians, and he thinks Begin is messing up our interests over there."

If there are ever any battles for Reagan's mind over the Mideast, the Israelis and their American friends view Alexander Haig as the strongest ally they have next to the president himself. As an ex-general, Haig is said to value especially Israel's military dependability, which is greater, he reportedly has told Israelis, than that of some NATO allies. State's Bureau of Near East and South Asian Affairs is little changed in manpower from the Carter days, and is regarded by both Arabs and Israelis as believing that the Palestinian issue is the key to peace in the Middle East. Several of Haig's appointees outside that bureau, though, are either strongly pro-Israeli or else "strategic consensus" types like himself who put the East-West conflict far ahead of the Arab-Israeli one in importance to US interests.

To the extent that it influences policy, the National Security Council staff is thought to be strongly pro-Israeli, but the predilections of Reagan's three key White House aides, Edwin Meese, James Baker, and Michael Deaver are largely unknown. Meese is thought by some allies of Israel to have helped Weinberger convince the president to go ahead with the AWACS sale before Haig could intervene. Baker causes worry as a Houston lawyer with oil connections.

"The real conflict here," said one pro-Israeli lobbyist, "is between the State careerists and some of Reagan's own cowboys. Reagan himself is a cowboy—not in any derogatory sense. It's John Wayne foreign policy. Israel is an ally in a battle against the Indians. Israel fares well in that match-up." To an American with close Arab contacts, the conflict is between "the people who want the anti-Soviet strategic consensus and those who are more evenhanded, who want to limit the Soviet threat by putting limits on Begin and getting an autonomy settlement that gives the Palestinians something worthwhile."

The administration promises to have its conflicts ironed out and a strategy in place sometime after Reagan meets the major Mideast leaders. That means any real peace push probably won't come until next year. It may be unfair to carp at an administration that tries to do one thing at a time, and do it right, especially after President Carter tried to do so many things at once, and got many wrong. Yet the Middle East parties are anxious, and some American Mideast experts are fearful. An Israeli diplomat said that "the Carter administration had a plan for the Middle East—the Brookings plan for a total Israeli withdrawal and involvement of the PLO." The Carter plan was not acceptable, he said, but "these [Reagan] people came in with no concept or plan. They've been in seven months. The Israeli elections have been over for six weeks, and there still is no plan. This is the worrying thing for foreign diplomats. The administration's decisions lack coherence." Meanwhile, an American Mideast expert said, "This is no time for delay. Things in the Middle East are at a very critical stage. The ceasefire probably will hold until Begin gets here, but you could have a war after that between Syria and Israel. If the rumors are true that the Soviets have guaranteed Syrian airspace, you know what it means if Israelis start shooting down Russians? You're talking about a scenario for World War III." That may be overstated and foreign diplomats may be too itchy for action, but clearly it's time for Reagan to get busy as a peacemaker.

Morton Kondracke

Coming:

High on the Hog, III:

Michael Kinsley on Inherited Wealth.

Blue-ribbon bosh.

The Well-Endowed Arts

"Save the performing arts, arts that I love," sang Leontyne Price. "Stand beside us and guide us/Through the night with those funds from above." This was at a hearing of the Senate Appropriations Interior Subcommittee, of all places. The issue was funding for the National Endowment for the Arts in 1982. Her tune wasn't original, her words weren't inspired, but her performance was dramatic, and she was keeping up a tradition that began when Congress established the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities in 1965. Whenever the endowments are due for reauthorization or appropriation bills, the president, the Congress, and an ever-growing creative constituency vigorously debate the claims of culture and the merits of saving and spending. The controversies rarely have a very constructive effect on cultural policy, but they can be counted on as an unusual source of public entertainment.

This year has been especially lively. In February President Reagan announced a drastic 50 percent cut in the budgets of the NEA and the National Endow-

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HOW TO USE A SELF-SERVICE GAS STATION

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Most self-service pumps have easy-to-follow directions printed right on them. Before you drive into a self-service station, it's helpful to know whether your car takes leaded gas, unleaded gas, or diesel fuel, and also where your fuel tank is located, so that you can pull up to the proper pump and have the fuel tank close at hand. The type of fuel your car requires should be printed on the instrument panel, and the fuel tank location can be found in the owner's manual.

If you don't find instructions on the pump, here's what to do at most stations: 1. Turn off the engine. 2. Remove the fuel cap. 3. Remove the nozzle from the pump and turn the pump lever to "ON." 4. Place the nozzle in your fuel tank and squeeze the trigger. 5. When the trigger clicks off, remove the nozzle from the tank and turn the pump lever to "OFF." 6. Replace your fuel cap.

There are some things, however, that the directions may not tell you. Fuel fumes are highly flammable, so you should never smoke at a service station. Also, fuel caps are easy to forget and lose, so when you remove the cap try to wedge it in between the door to the tank and body of the car, where you're not likely to forget it. All 1981 and most older General Motors cars have fuel caps that twist on and then click when secure.

When you're filling up, try to avoid topping off your tank, since it may overflow. If fuel does spill on your car, you should wash it off as soon as possible, to avoid paint damage.

After you fill your tank, remember to clean your windshield. If you've been driving in bad weather, be sure to wipe off your side mirrors and headlights, too.

A quick-maintenance inspection can help you spot potential trouble. You don't need any expensive tools—just a good quality tire gauge, a rag or paper towel, an oil can spout kept in a plastic bag, and a jug of premixed windshield washer fluid, such as GM Optikleen.

To check your engine oil, pull out the dipstick, wipe it clean, insert it again, then pull it back out. The oil should be between the marks labeled "FULL" and "ADD." If it's below "ADD," add a quart of the oil recommended in your GM owner's manual.

You should also check the coolant level. Most GM cars have a see-through recovery tank. If the level looks low, add coolant to this tank. Never remove the radiator cap when the engine is hot, because pressurized coolant may overflow and burn you.

Periodically check your brake, transmission, and power steering fluid levels. Your owner's manual tells you how. Remember to keep the windshield washer reservoir filled with fluid, too, especially in the winter when you use it most often.

Most GM cars are equipped with maintenance-free batteries. But it's still wise to make sure their cables are on tight and the ends aren't frayed. Look for fraying, cracks, or other signs of wear on belts, too.

Look at tires for signs of wear or worn-out edges which can indicate improper inflation or the need for alignment. Once a month, you should use a tire gauge to check the pressure. In GM cars, the recommended pressure is on the left front door edge or inside the glove compartment. Recommended pressure is for cold tires, so check them before you drive more than a mile.

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ment for the Humanities as part of his plan to reduce government spending. The administration proposed to decrease the 1982 NEA budget from President Carter's requested $175 million to $88 million, and the NEH budget from $169 million to $85 million. Leontyne Price was only one of many artists who immediately turned their talents to lobbying in and out of Congress against their federal patron's parsimony. Perhaps you've been among those audiences abruptly plunged into darkness roughly a third of the way through your play. That's the way several theater directors decided one recent weekend to demonstrate how little your ticket pays for and how much you count on the federal government.

In reaction to the outcry raised in song and story, President Reagan appointed a White House Task Force on the Arts and Humanities (starring his friend and fellow actor, Charlton Heston) to come up with suggestions over the summer on ways to increase private support and to improve the operation of the endowments. Such blue-ribbon commissions are standard symbolic spectacles in Washington. This particular show of solicitude (of a kind that none of the budget's other victims has received) was deemed especially proper, one of its planners told the *Washington Post*, "considering the president is an artist."

The substantive debate behind this public drama is less than enlightening. The philosophy that informs the Reagan administration's position can be found in the Heritage Foundation report, *Mandate for Leadership*, the conservative agenda prepared for the Reagan transition team. It warns of the danger of the "federalization," the "creeping nationalization of culture," posed by the growth of the endowments. It maintains that "as a true friend of democracy, the NEH can teach the nation the limits of the equalitarian impulse"; the NEA, for its part, should oversee "a rigorous attempt to allow art . . . to exist in a free marketplace of aesthetic ideas." In the budget message itself, the administration skipped the philosophizing about aesthetics and politics in favor of cruder economic reasoning. The announced rationale for cutting the endowment budgets in half was twofold: first, the administration accused the endowments of "promoting the notion that the Federal government should be the financial patron of first resort," thus discouraging private support; second, the endowments only rated as "a relatively low priority budget item."

NONE of the administration's arguments stands up very well and only some of the counterarguments of the endowments' defenders stand up slightly better. The Heritage Foundation report's fears about "creeping nationalization" are excessive: the endowments' budgets are less than ten percent of the total amount spent annually in support of the arts and humanities by both private and public sources in the US. And to charge cultural policy with the "elitist" task of teaching "the limits of the equalitarian impulse," as the writers of the report do, is unrealistic and inappropriate; it's no improvement over the ideas they attribute to their opponents, whom they criticize for imposing the "populist" mission of alleviating all of society's ills.

The rationales presented in the budget are also dubious. The first claim—that the endowments have usurped the role of private support—is wrong, judging from available evidence. There have been no studies of the direct causal relation between government and private spending. But what evidence there is suggests that the endowments certainly haven't discouraged private giving. During the first ten years of the endowments' lives, for example, private contributions to the arts and humanities increased 600 percent, compared to 14 percent during the ten years before that. Nonetheless, there aren't adequate figures to prove that the endowments' challenge grants are quite the wondrous stimulus to private support their defenders say they are.

THE SECOND claim made in the budget—that the endowments are a low-priority item—has been challenged too, both on economic and on more ephemeral grounds. Joseph Duffey, head of the NEH, said his endowment was fully prepared to make "proportionate contributions" to fiscal restraint, but 50 percent cuts were surely more than that—and would hardly amount to a significant saving in the grand scheme of the budget. After all, ran the refrain at congressional hearings, the Defense Department has $52 million to spend on military bands, compared to the NEA's $13.5 million to divide among the nation's orchestras, chamber music groups, composers, etc. This understandably fuels the righteous indignation of artists and scholars. But they, like their slashers, go too far. What's missing is any trace of humble acknowledgment that they are also necessarily competing for federal money with others far needier than they. Nor is it popular to point out that the endowments' funds represent a transfer payment from the poor taxpayer to the less poor, since the arts and humanities serve a predominantly affluent, well-educated audience. Whatever concern artists and scholars might feel about these complicating economic facts seems to be outweighed by a conviction of their own spiritual indispensability. They've converted politicians as well. At a congressional hearing Representative Paul Simon, Democrat of Illinois, intoned, "During times of national stress—and surely this is one of those periods—our artists help to keep our national spirit alive."

There is, however, a well-worn rationale the administration could have used easily and successfully, but unaccountably ignored. That's the favorite "cutting-the-fat" justification, so frequently invoked in the slashing of other social programs. In fact, it's especially apposite to the endowments, since the fat there isn't likely to be the "marbleized" kind some liberals rightly worry about cutting because poor flesh must be cut along with it. The endowments display fat of the wine

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and cheese variety: time and money that is lost to administrative padding and parties to maintain a gala profile—to say nothing of their share of mismanagement.

But instead of being told to cut the fat, the endowments are being treated to more of it—in the form of the special task force. Such commissions are supposed to generate publicity, not definitive conclusions about policy. So far this one, which is "nowhere near a consensus" yet, has indeed proved itself to be a "debating society, not an endorsing society." That's how Hanna Gray, president of the University of Chicago, who heads the task force with Heston, characterized it to those who worried the group might just confirm the administration's plans (which don't amount to much more than a vague notion of replacing the endowments with a structure modeled after the Corporation for Public Broadcasting).

CHARLTON Heston was even nearer the mark than Gray when he let slip some doubt about the constructive nature of the debating society at its first meeting: "I think we can provide some useful advice, but I make no promises." This is a man who knows what he's up against: as Moses he parted the Red Sea, as Ben-Hur he beat Rome's finest in a chariot race, but as co-chairman of a White House task force he knows better than to make grand claims. Throughout the task force proceedings, he has played a refreshingly skeptical role. "If you get more than five people around a table, it gets to be a meeting," he warned the *Washington Post*, "and about all you conclude from a meeting is that it would be a good idea to have another." So he proposed few of them—outré by the standards of task force etiquette. He also dared to air a couple of unusually straightforward, substantive views. With the imminent budget cuts sensibly in mind, he observed that "there are an awful lot of filing cabinets and people who put things in them" at the endowments. He also ventured to suggest that the NEA's "Expansion Arts" program, begun in 1971 to support, in the NEA's words, "community-based arts organizations that reflect the cultural diversity in America, . . . that are multi-hued and multi-lingual," might be transferred to the Department of Health and Human Services.

But before the task force's first organizational meeting was over, it was clear that Heston would not set the style. The prospect of only a few meetings crushed several of the 32 members of the task force panel. Actress Margo Albert (one of the panel's celebrities, along with Beverly Sills, who mingle with a variety of Reagan supporters, Californians concerned with culture, corporate executives, and important arts administrators) told her fellow panelists that she felt it was crucial that "we have more time to meet with each other, look into each other's eyes, and inform ourselves." So there has been a succession of three regional meetings. (Heston commented dryly at the first meeting: "It's clear that the degree of this body's willingness to fly back and forth across the country is underestimated.") The conferences have been elegantly festive. The first came with lunch, a cocktail reception at the East Wing of the National Gallery, and a play at the Kennedy Center, followed by a late supper. The Washington regional meeting took place within the paneled walls of the Supreme Court's East Conference Room. The Chief Justice himself came to welcome the gathering.

To judge from the Washington meeting of July 13, few substantive ideas accompany the elegance. The members of the panel seemed disinclined to make specific comments about existing endowment programs; no doubt they had in mind the incensed telegram from the National Urban Coalition that Heston's remarks about Expansion Arts had provoked. In any case, few of them appeared to be very well informed about the endowments (despite their briefing books—prepared especially for airplane skimming, according to an endowment staffer) or about the details of other relevant issues. Thus the discussions—about the endowments' structure and about private support—were all pointlessly vague. At each turn of the meandering discussion, the task force staff hovering in the background was ordered to do further study and produce a report.

BUT THERE weren't even vague discussions about further study on the most pressing question of all: in what ways should the endowments cut back to meet the budget reductions? When a bemused panel member dared raise the issue as the meeting neared an end, Daniel Terra, the president's ambassador-at-large for cultural affairs and the task force's third co-chairman, mumbled that the subject was one burden too many for the task force. Instead he was eager to end on a cheerful note, with assurances of the president's very personal interest in the arts, which Terra knew firsthand from life with Reagan on the campaign trail. Terra recalled, "When it got that time of night when you kick off your shoes and say, 'The hell with the campaign,' the president, knowing of my interest, would always say, 'Let's talk about the arts.'" No doubt Reagan was soon drowsy for Terra is not spellbinding on the subject.

It's not entirely Terra's fault. The truth is, the funding of the arts and humanities is not a very exciting topic, once you get past the glamorous constituency with its theatrical lobbying talents, past the dramatic cries of alarm about how, on the one hand, "we are going to become a land without music, without theater, without dance" (that's Clive Barnes) and about how, on the other hand, we are in danger of creating an ossified cultural bureaucracy. In fact, now that the basic principle of federal support for the arts and humanities is assumed, such sweeping debates have little effect on the formulation of public policy—luckily, since the evidence suggests that both sides are mostly crying wolf. As Dick Netzer explains in his

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book, *The Subsidized Muse*, "Public policy toward the arts in the United States tends to be the sum total of many separate responses to narrowly defined questions rather than the result of a few decisions about broad issues."

This year federal spending for the arts and humanities is one of many figures being cranked out in the grand budget machinations. The final numbers that have emerged from the reconciliation conference between the House and Senate budget committees are not as low as many feared: $119.3 million authorized for the NEA, $113.7 million for the NEH. Those figures are significantly higher than the administration's initial proposals, though still much lower than this year's budgets of $159 and $151 million for the NEA and NEH respectively. Such cuts don't mean that the endowments and cultural policy have to be "completely revamped," as the 50 percent slashes seemed to require. But they do mean there have to be new and more stringent answers to all those less than thrilling "narrowly defined questions" which Netzer writes of: Should the endowments reassess their array of programs? Should the balance of grants to major cultural institutions and individuals be changed? Should amateur artistic and scholarly activities be included in the scope of the endowments? Should all profit-making activities be excluded? How might the challenge grant system be modified? Is some corporate structure to generate revenue desirable and legally feasible as an adjunct or an alternative to the endowments? What kind of tax incentives might be considered to encourage private and corporate giving? These questions don't merit a special task force of prominent people jetting about the country to share, briefly, broad ideas with one another. They require only about five people, and there are such people on the task force staff, but they could be at work without it, reporting to the endowments: an industrious congressional staffer who, freed from the laborious work of coordinating busy people's schedules for meetings, could devote himself to some basic research; two people at the endowments ready to answer questions; maybe a policy analyst; and a lawyer. The Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress is already helping on some of these questions, and could be assigned more work without any fuss. That wouldn't make news, of course. But 32 task force members could avoid meandering meetings, and the president would be spared a blue-ribbon report to make him drowsy in September.

Ann Hulbert

When its Time came, its number was up.

The 'Star' Winks Out

by Emily Yoffe

After word came that the *Washington Star* would cease publication on August 7, the first reaction of the talented young reporters on the paper was what you might expect: shock, dismay, grief. But within a few days, according to several of them, these same young reporters began to shudder each time they heard a rumor that someone, somehow, might step in and save the paper at the last moment. Job offers from the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and other prestigious publications had begun to pour in, and they were contingent on the folding of the *Star*. It is compelling testimony to the paper's evisceration under the management of Time Inc. that its disappearance would so clearly provide a career boost to many of the people who worked for it.

As has been pointed out in the numerous postmortems, as well as in the recent spate of critical articles (in the *Washington Monthly*, the *Columbia Journalism Review*, and the *Wall Street Journal*) that preceded the paper's demise, the *Washington Star* was a good newspaper, possibly the best afternoon paper in the country, with some of the finest journalists in the profession: Mary McGrory, John Fialka, Lyle Denniston, Jack Germond, Jules Witcover. But it has been pointed out just as consistently that there was no reason for people who read the *Washington Post* in the morning to read the *Washington Star* in the afternoon. And in spite of the historical decline of competing major metropolitan dailies (A. J. Liebling observed back in 1960, "If a journalist is working in a town where there are two ownerships, he is even money to become unemployed any minute"), the *Star*, three years and $85 million after being bought by Time Inc., had become lifeless, predictable, and superfluous.

The day after the announcement of the planned closing of the *Star*, managing editor Stanley Cloud,

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appearing on a local public affairs television show, conceded that the paper failed to create a clear identity to distinguish it from the *Post*, and that Time moved "too slowly and cautiously" with the paper, a trait he said was a hallmark of the corporation's style. But neither the *Star*'s readers nor its reporters were clear about what the paper was moving *toward*. "There was never any clear direction, and no real idea of whom the *Star* wanted to reach," said one *Star* reporter.

CERTAINLY the *Star* was a different newspaper under Time Inc. than it had been in the oft-lamented days of stewardship under editor James Bellows, who was brought in by Joe Allbritton, the owner from 1974-77. Knowing that the *Star* could not shake the grip of the *Washington Post*, Bellows made the *Star* a paper to be read in addition to the wide-ranging *Post*. His *Star* was full of long analytical pieces and irreverent features. Two of his features were so successful—the gossip column "Ear" and expanded television coverage—that they were copied by the *Post* (the latter successfully, the former not). But Time's *Star* quickly became a pale imitation of the *Post*, full of short, hard news stories, so the dominant paper had no reason to look over its shoulder to see what tricks the upstart was pulling.

The anger of the *Star* employees is not just at the loss, however temporary, of their jobs. It is fueled by a sense of betrayal. When Time Inc. took over, it brought along its record as a winner. People felt that the *Star* was finally going to get the resources and commitment needed to give it a fair shot. Instead, over the three years of Time ownership, it was systematically reduced to a newspaper many of its own employees found unnecessary. Staff disgust at the visionless Time management is not, however, directed at some faceless "they." *Star* staffers evidence a certain satisfaction in knowing exactly whom to fault: editor Murray J. Gart. As Gregg Easterbrook wrote in his article on the *Star*'s "suicide" in the *Washington Monthly*, Gart acted as a banana republic dictator who was hated and feared by his subjects. He is described as a man distrustful of all but officially sanctioned news. "All the sub-editors were afraid of Murray so they didn't even propose anything he wouldn't like, and Murray didn't like analytical stories, investigative stories, feature stories, or anything over 20 inches," said one reporter. This led to frustrated reporters and bored readers.

The *Star* did become more comprehensive than it had been under Bellows. But because it didn't have the staff or news space of the *Post*, it became a sort of summary of its competitor without the analytical, investigative, and feature stories the *Post* does so well. In addition, Gart sacrificed valuable front-page space for a digest of the day's news, in essence a summary of a summary.

Instances of Gart's staff-crushing and the inferred motives for his acts have appeared with such consistency in the press, it's as if medieval troubadours are securing the legend of a malevolent ruler. For instance, Gart killed a three-month investigation by reporter Howie Kurtz on local housing discrimination because, it is assumed, Gart either feared offending advertisers or feared investigations. He removed film critic Tom Dowling from his beat after Dowling panned *The Empire Strikes Back* the week the movie received a cover panegyric in *Time*. Embarrassed by an editorial attacking the qualifications of friend and Time Inc. director Thomas Watson to be Carter's ambassador to the Soviet Union, he "requested" some good things be said about Watson. Upon Watson's confirmation they were duly reported. Complaints that *Star* reporters had to be flacks for the owners were endemic. Mary McGrory said on television that the paper was expected to be a "court circular" for Time Inc.

Managing editor Cloud admitted, "It's true Murray is and was a little uncomfortable with the concept of investigative reporting; he didn't know how to put it to good use," but his view of Gart does not reflect the corporate line. Time Inc. spokesman Donald M. Wilson said that under Gart's control the paper had many controversial pieces. When asked to name a few, several days after the announcement of the *Star*'s folding, he cited the comic strip "Doonesbury" and the columns of feature writer Judy Bachrach, one of the few *Star* staffers with near total freedom. Unfortunately her talent was exceeded by her tastelessness. Recently she treated her readers to an exclusive, if secondhand, report from London on Prince Charles's prowess, or lack thereof, in bed. Don't fret for Shy Di, however; she won't know what she's missing. Bachrach, in a subsequent column, speculated at length about the young woman's virginity. Well, at least Bachrach gave readers something to talk about.

Gart has dismissed the *Post* as "*Pravda* on the Potomac." But if the *Post* was *Pravda*, then the *Star* was *Izvestia*. According to *Star* staffers, any story that appeared in the *Post* had better be in that day's *Star*. Instead of encouraging *Star* reporters to challenge the *Post*'s coverage, the concession to the *Post*'s dominance did little for staff morale. One local reporter was happily writing a memo to his editors citing the mistaken figures in a *Post* property tax story—which the reporter had covered weeks earlier—when he discovered a rewrite of the *Post* story, mistakes and all, in the *Star*'s first edition.

TIME INC. was not bereft of ideas for the *Star*. Unfortunately, whatever the merits of two major and expensive innovations—zoned metropolitan coverage, and a morning edition—their execution was so inadequate that it only added to the paper's decline. "Zoned local coverage was probably the *Star*'s best opportunity, but the financial resources were not there," said Bruce Thorp, newspaper analyst with the brokerage firm John Muir & Co. "The [five] local editions started to look like each other. You could see Fairfax County stories in the Montgomery County

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edition." It soon became clear the zoned editions were not going to attract the readers who either felt their concerns were skimped on by the *Post*, or who wanted more insight than is provided by a string of semi-weekly suburban Washington papers.

One *Star* local reporter said he learned his lesson after several of his ideas for longer analytic pieces were shot down; he simply read the suburban paper and rewrote it. Investigative stories usually were out of the question in any case, since the bureaus were so under-staffed that the reporters out there had little time to do anything beyond routine news stories. "Toward the end, the only reason I could see for publishing was simply that the *Washington Star* had been coming out for 128 years," he said. These young reporters were further demoralized because the normal route for advancement, doing tough, provocative local stories, was short-circuited since Gart had little interest in local news and only reluctantly put it on the front page.

NEWSPAPER habits are hard to change, and one of the most difficult tasks is to convince people to buy a paper at a different time of day than they're used to. The advent of the morning edition of the *Star* represented the worst of all worlds: in essence, it created a 24-hour-a-day newspaper without an increase in staff; it was an inadequate challenge to the *Post*'s ownership of the morning market; and it established deadlines that made it impossible to have fresh news in most of the paper's afternoon editions. And the a.m. edition was only available for street sale, not for home delivery. The few readers who chose to purchase the morning *Star* also chose to forgo the afternoon edition.

The statistics on the *Star*'s readership were devastating: the *Star*'s recent circulation was 323,000 daily and 294,000 Sunday, compared to the *Post*'s 618,000 daily and 845,000 Sunday. When Time Inc. bought the *Star* in 1978, its circulation was 329,000 daily and 316,000 Sunday. In order to beef up advertising and circulation, the *Star* heavily discounted its advertising and subscription rates. But the *Star* was not able to attract 30 percent of the area's newspaper advertising revenue, which is considered the minimum figure for survival, and the discounting meant that what ad volume there was did not bring in enough money. When the recession of 1980 hit, it undid whatever small gains the *Star* had made in advertising linage; area advertisers didn't have money for a second newspaper, and when advertising volume goes down, so does reader interest. At the end the *Star* was taking in 15 cents of every newspaper advertising dollar in this city. The other 85 cents went to the *Post*.

Since the announcement of the folding there have been accusations that the *Post*'s advertising tactics helped squeeze the last bit of life out of the *Star*. The *Post* raised its rates significantly in the last year, thus seemingly making it impossible for merchants to buy space in two newspapers. There have also been allegations that *Post* salespeople threatened advertisers loyal to the *Star* that when the *Star* folded, as they promised it would, the advertisers would get bad placement when they turned to the *Post*. Robert McCormick, the *Post*'s vice president of advertising, dismissed the charges as "nonsense." Financial analyst Bruce Thorp said that no particular tactic of the *Post*'s was critical to the *Star*'s demise. "There have been lawsuits by failing newspapers that the dominant newspaper *cut* ad rates in order to hurt the competition. No serious antitrust charges have been raised in this case. The trend has been going against the *Star* for 30 years. Nothing unusual happened in the last few months."

Although Time Inc. did not come through with enough money to make the initial investments in zoned local sections and a morning edition pay off, it did put more money into promotion than the paper had done in years. But even the promotion campaigns were lifeless. The most recent ad showed two newspapers side by side. Slowly one unidentified paper lists and falls over as the announcer declares that some newspapers are slanted and biased. The unbiased, unslanted, and still standing newspaper is revealed to be the *Star*. The ad is a virtual celebration of dullness.

COULD the *Star* have been saved if it were more shrewdly managed? One popular theory is that a Bellows-like paper, with the promotional resources of Time Inc., might have had a chance; or a really strong local paper, not the halfhearted product that was tried, might have steadied the decline of reader; or that a tabloid with emphasis on sports and extensive and irreverent coverage of government—the only game in town—would have provided a personality distinctly different from that of the *Post*.

For decades the leitmotif of the newspaper business has been the dirge. Evening papers in particular have been vulnerable for a variety of reasons: a switch to television for evening news; later starting work days, which leave time to read a morning paper; the difficulty of distribution through evening rush hour. Added to this, the *Star* was forced to compete with one of the strongest and best newspapers in the country. Perhaps nothing could have saved Washington from becoming a one-newspaper town. But in spite of its $85 million, Time Inc. never brought to it the commitment and daring of the company which early in its existence created *Time*, *Life*, and *Fortune*. It seems that since the *Star* couldn't be plugged into a formula for success—à la *People* and *Money*—that it was just a matter of time before Time Inc. cut its losses. There is no guarantee that if Time Inc. had done it right—if it had fulfilled people's expectations and used its resources and the *Star*'s staff to create something glorious—it would have, as newspapers must, made money. But Time Inc. didn't do it right. And this city's mourning of another lost voice is tinged with regret for what that voice might have been.

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From the snakepits to the streets, via the "community."

Mental Health's Malady

by Dorothy Wickenden

In a special message to Congress on mental illness in 1963, President John Kennedy fervently advocated a national program of care for the mentally ill. It was a revolutionary and highly idealistic proposal:

> This approach is designed, in large measure, to use Federal resources to stimulate State, local and private action. . . . [R]eliance on the cold mercy of custodial isolation will be supplanted by the open warmth of community concern and capability. Emphasis on prevention, treatment and rehabilitation will be substituted for a desultory interest in confining patients in an institution to wither away.

For almost a century the mentally ill had been sequestered in isolated, understaffed, and overcrowded state asylums that had come to be known as "snakepits." The Community Mental Health Centers Act, passed by Congress eight months after Kennedy's message, was designed to change all of that. Community mental health was one of the most ambitious social reform programs of the 1960s. It has had many remarkable success stories, but today it is known largely for its failures. The people who were rehabilitated quietly returned to normal lives; those who were not are painfully visible. The hallucinating schizophrenic who was straightjacketed in the hospital at the turn of the century may now be wandering down Broadway, panhandling, rummaging through garbage cans, and muttering weird incantations.

Under the 1963 act, the National Institute of Mental Health was asked to devise a system to get patients out of the vast hospitals and back into their homes (or into supervised halfway houses or apartments if necessary). From there they would go for treatment in small nearby clinics, where specially trained, dedicated staffs would work with state and private hospitals, with government agencies, and with concerned citizens to make them functioning members of society again. Doctors had concluded that extended confinement in hospitals too often made patients worse, not better. The new idea was to prescribe proper medication and therapy, and to encourage patients to become involved in work, family, and society. Community mental health centers were set up around the country, offering a minimum of five medical services: inpatient care, outpatient care, partial hospitalization, emergency treatment, and consultation and education programs.

The community mental health program was the product of a burgeoning economy and a pervasive optimism about the country's ability to cure social ills. Encouraged by the advances in modern medicine, psychiatrists began making rosy forecasts about their patients' futures. Antipsychotic drugs, introduced in the US in 1953, had made it possible to restore emotional balance to schizophrenics and other psychotic patients. Kennedy predicted the community mental health program would help reduce the number of patients under custodial care by at least 50 percent. His estimate proved to be conservative. Between 1963 and 1977, the number of patients in state and country hospitals dwindled from 505,000 to 159,000.

But now, instead of worrying about the "cold mercy of custodial isolation," people in mental health have to cope with the problem of the revolving door. The "new chronic" patient may no longer be confined for years on end or for life, but he may need both ongoing treatment in a CMHC and short, periodic stays in a state hospital. Mental health reformers in the 1960s and 1970s made extravagant promises about rehabilitating the mentally ill and relieving their dependency upon public support. Contrary to their expectations, there are still thousands of schizophrenics who remain difficult to treat and who bounce in and out of hospitals with distressing frequency. They are a formidable strain on centers' staffs, budgets, and services. The brave new program of mental "health," at least indirectly, fostered a new kind of welfare case.

Unquestionably CMHCs have been a boon to those who previously had little or no access to psychiatric care, and for a great many who were poorly treated in state hospitals. In 1968, about 272,000 people had been served by CMHCs; by 1978 this number had grown to 2.13 million. In 1976, more than half the people using CMHCs earned under $5,000 a year. Although many people who can afford expensive private psychiatric care do not use CMHCs, centers have gone out of their way to serve a cross section of society, including all ages, ethnic groups, and types of disability—from mild neuroses to paranoid schizophrenia. One CMHC patient said he was there because he'd been frightened by homicidal feelings, another because she'd taken a drug overdose. Traumas caused by sexual assault and marital and family difficulties are common. The majority of patients in CMHCs are short-term acute cases, and group therapy is beginning to replace long-term individual sessions. One woman compared her six-month stay at Western State Hospital with her participation in the Day Treatment Program at the Mount

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Vernon CMHC in Virginia. "There they deal with you physically; they give you more medication to keep you quiet. My ward was locked and my room had bars on the windows. Here they help you deal with your problems."

The CMHC program made a crucial mistake, however, by underestimating the complexity and scope of its work. During the early days of community mental health, people faithfully assumed that humane care would follow once patients were discharged from the hospital. But the program's mission seems less inspiring now that centers are saddled with patients who need a great deal more than short-term medical care. Many are homeless as well as unemployed; they not only lack medical insurance, but are in need of food and clothing as well. Today state hospitals frequently can't release patients simply because there is no place else for them to go; single-room occupancy hotels, subsidized housing, and openings in skilled nursing homes are becoming increasingly scarce. It is impossible to keep track of all the patients discharged from state hospitals when neither the hospital nor the CMHC can spare the staff or the time required for proper follow-up care. Patients who don't make the daily trip to the center by themselves, or who are confined at home because of age or physical handicap, are often left to cope on their own. And the new wonder drugs like Thorazine that are used to stabilize the chronically ill turn out to have some unpleasant physical side effects.

THE DREAM of citizen participation in CMHCs, one of the basic ideals of the program, has vanished in many areas. Governing boards have trouble recruiting and keeping their volunteer members. And in cities like New York and Washington, as well as in many residential neighborhoods where discharged patients and other needy individuals have overwhelmed local facilities, citizen groups have banded together to oppose new zoning laws that would allow halfway houses and shelters in their neighborhoods. People who previously never had to think about mental illness are affronted and frightened by the indiscretions of the bag ladies and vagrants who have become a nuisance on their streets. Mental health care activists had hoped that somehow charitable "community" members would have their social consciences roused when they lived side by side with those less fortunate than they. But they never really defined the term "community," and a more typical response has been a desire to push them out of the neighborhood and out of sight.

By the 1970s community mental health was in a bind. At first glance the figures look promising: of the 781 CMHCs set up under federal funds, 541 have "graduated" (meaning they no longer rely on the initial eight-year grant, but on patient fees, insurance payments, and funds from state and local governments). Only one of the centers has gone bankrupt. Yet Saul Feldman, for many years a top administrator at NIMH, points out that at a time when the program should have been facing up to its limitations, people were still encouraging unrealistic expectations. Amendments added in 1975 to the 1963 act meant that to be eligible for a federal grant, a CMHC had to provide seven services in addition to the original five: programs for alcoholics, drug abusers, the elderly, children, adolescents, minorities, and chronically ill patients. As community mental health got swept up in its heady mission, it became over-ambitious and its priorities more and more diffuse. Many centers that have "graduated" find themselves desperately overextended.

WORKERS in the program today readily concede that the time is overdue to redefine and adjust services, particularly with Congress's 25 percent slicing of allocations for mental health. Ardor for the program's potential has been replaced by a weary pragmatism about its liabilities. Administrators wring their hands about staff shortages and insurance reimbursement difficulties. They say it is impossible on meager budgets to meet all of the disparate needs of their clients, as well as the proliferating requirements for state certification. Shirley Costello, the director of the Mount Vernon CMHC, says: "We are facing the problem of continuing survival. Provisions from state governments are often paltry. As federal funds dry up, centers will have to decide which direction to take. There won't be the resources to do everything we'd like."

When CMHCs lose their grant money and are forced to lay off crucial staff members, morale tends to plummet and the administration of the center to buckle. Administrators are torn between their early hopes for the program and the necessity to scale down services. There is internal bickering about how to divvy up money and responsibilities. Psychiatrists, who are essential to the centers for accurate diagnoses and prescriptions, often lose their enthusiasm for the concept of community mental health and drift back to private practice. Prince George's County Comprehensive CMHC No. 1 in Maryland, a poor center that serves a predominantly poor population, has been riven by administrative chaos since it opened ten years ago. No one can decide just what function the center should serve. Helen McAllister, acting health officer for Prince George's County, says: "We're like a car that's sputtering. We aren't using our services as efficiently as we could. We aren't sure what our priorities are. Some feel the emphasis should be on the chronic patient, others on developing new funding resources. People in the community are active and willing, but everything's splintered." Some of the center's services are in the county health department and others in the county hospital up the hill. Officials in the two buildings have been more concerned about their own status than about working cooperatively to improve the center. Despite the tireless efforts of a few exceptional

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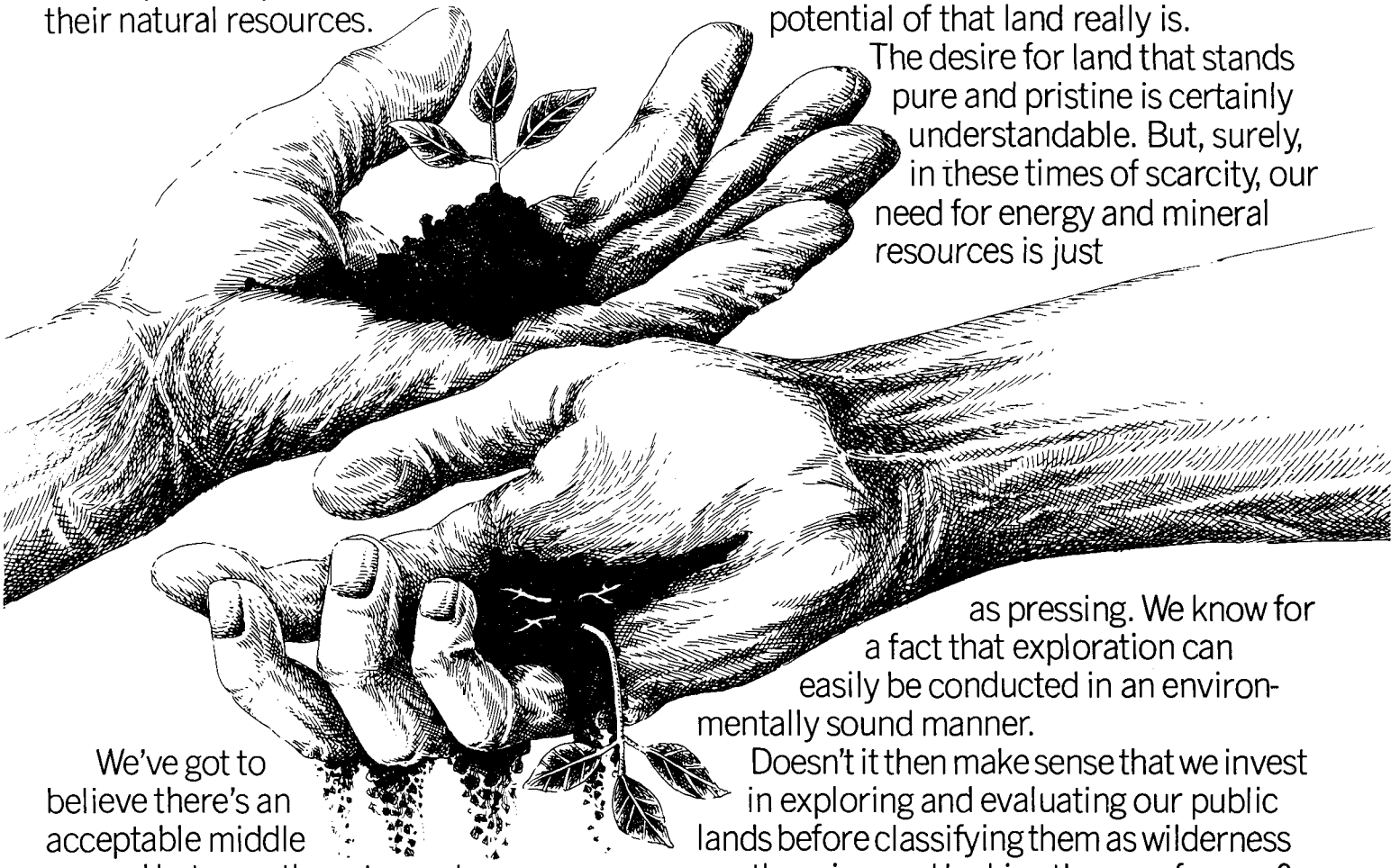
Some want to keep our land unspoiled. Some want to explore it. We want to explore without spoiling.

There's a strange either-or proposition building up in this country.

It's one that says either we completely preserve our public lands by turning them into permanent wilderness, or we tear them up and exploit them to the fullest for their natural resources.



We've got to believe there's an acceptable middle ground between these two extremes.

At least that's what all of us at Atlantic Richfield believe. And so do the many Americans who have invested with us.

Look at the facts. Our public lands currently supply an estimated 10% of our energy. Yet they actually contain about one half of all our known domestic energy resources — vast amounts of coal, oil shale, tar sands, crude oil and natural gas.

Over 40% of the 760 million acres the federal government owns has been withdrawn from mineral mining or leasing.

Another 25% has been placed under regulation that effectively precludes oil, gas and mining operations.

All without ever finding out first, through preliminary exploration, what the resource potential of that land really is.

The desire for land that stands pure and pristine is certainly understandable. But, surely, in these times of scarcity, our need for energy and mineral resources is just as pressing. We know for a fact that exploration can easily be conducted in an environmentally sound manner.

Doesn't it then make sense that we invest in exploring and evaluating our public lands before classifying them as wilderness or otherwise, and locking them up forever?

At least then we could make sure we're doing the right thing.

Or so it seems to us at Atlantic Richfield.

There are no easy answers.

ARCO

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administrators like McAllister, it emits an air of exhaustion and neglect.

The situation is distinctly different at the tidy, attractive, and superbly efficient Mount Vernon CMHC (now in the fifth year of its federal grant), located in a neighborhood whose residents include both the very rich and the very poor. This center has a good working relationship with a private, nonprofit hospital across the street, where six beds are set aside on the psychiatric nursing unit for center patients. At the Mount Vernon center, unlike at Prince George's, the halls and conference rooms are filled with energetic staff members and patients conversing and working on projects.

Four years ago Helen McAllister helped conduct a three-month review of follow-up care for Prince George's County patients discharged from Spring Grove State Hospital. Its results are astonishing to an outsider, but workers in the field merely take note of them with grim resignation. The study revealed that 60 to 70 percent of these patients had simply disappeared. This is what is known in the business as "slipping through the cracks." Like McAllister, Beverly Zeidenberg, a center therapist, bemoans the lack of contact with Spring Grove, 35 miles away, and complains that released patients come to her without documents giving their history of treatment and medication. She says that the people who most need help are not getting it, and too many who are not sick are foisted upon the centers. Judges reluctant to send people charged with petty crimes like check forgery and mail fraud off to overcrowded jails tend to refer them to the center as part of their probation. They resent the sentence as much as the center's overworked staff. They also have a tendency to skip appointments.

MANY of the dilemmas CMHCs face could be alleviated if state and local legislatures took over when federal support expired. Representative Henry Waxman, Democrat of California, who heads the House Subcommittee on Health and the Environment, says that states have shirked the task they were assigned under the 1963 act. "It is one of the great disgraces that advances were made to the states that were not used to help out the discharged patients. It was cheaper and easier for them to dump the patients and not to provide for them at all." Once the patient was out on the street, he became a federal responsibility and the state could turn its sights on less troublesome problems. In New York, where there is a vast network of state hospitals, the difficulties of dealing with the released patients—along with all the other casualties of welfare cuts and unemployment—are crippling. CMHCs, church groups, and shelters for the homeless have been able to help some, but not all.

State and county hospitals have drastically reduced their patient populations over the past 18 years, but few of them have shut down or substantially reduced their staffs. In fact, according to NIMH, although between 1963 and 1977 the number of patients in state and county hospitals decreased by 346,000, hospital staffs *increased* in this period from 200,000 to 205,000, and the number of hospitals *grew* from 284 to 295. In Maryland, state hospitals are still receiving 75 percent of the budget for mental health. Health centers get only 25 percent, although they supply the vast majority of psychiatric care in the state. In 1980, state hospitals in Maryland served approximately 13,800 patients, and the six federally funded CMHCs, plus about 45 other community-based programs, served 44,800. In Maryland, as in New York, there has not been a formula for transferring money and staff into the community as the beds decrease; and local legislatures find it hard to ignore the pleas of workers in large state facilities, which often are the only industry in the area. In its new bill on mental health, Congress has included a discretionary fund for the Department of Health and Human Services to use to retrain employees who are displaced when hospitals close down.

THE House-Senate budget conference gave mental health roughly the same treatment it gave other Great Society programs. Congress agreed to consolidate funding for mental health in a $491-million block grant that would include mental health care with alcohol and drug abuse programs. This represents a considerable cut from allocations agreed to by President Carter in the 1980 Mental Health Systems Act, and it explicitly puts mental health care into the hands of the states. It remains to be seen whether state and local legislatures will take over the federal initiative in a way they haven't in the past, and whether the community mental health program will be willing to make some hard-headed decisions about which services are expendable. If not, the program will cease altogether to serve the chronically ill patient, who most needs it and is least able to pay. CMHCs must spend less time with patients who can be referred to private psychiatrists or other agencies; they must resist the temptation to begin new programs designed to appeal to special interest groups (minorities, the elderly, women); they must work up budgets that will use the money brought in by paying clients to offset the costs of caring for the nonpaying and the uninsured. Community mental health cannot solve all of the injustices society metes out to underprivileged and exploited groups. But it can provide emergency and ongoing treatment for patients discharged from state hospitals and short-term counseling and medication for those who are not chronically ill.

Walter Reich, research psychiatrist and program director of the staff college at NIMH, says: "There is an obvious fact behind the public care of the mentally ill: it is in many cases an illness different from other illnesses. People who become mentally ill often drop out of the arena of economic functioning forever, or at least for long periods of time. At those times, if there are no private sources of support, they become wards

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of the state. People with chronic mental illness often are unable to support their own treatment. If their families can't do so, it is a public trust, as it has been for centuries." When Reagan talks breezily about getting the government off our backs, he is overlooking the most silent and ineffectual group in society.

The community mental health program has been hurt by well-meaning liberals whose vision of a healthy society was based more upon abstract hope than upon a realistic appraisal of the program's task. It is about to be hurt more severely by shrewd, tough-talking conservatives who, with the blessing of President Reagan, appear to be methodically dismantling the welfare state. If the program takes a sober look at its limitations and at its commendable achievements, it can continue to do, in a limited way, what it generally has done quite well over the past 18 years: restore hundreds of thousands of people with mental illness to independent lives outside hospital walls. If it does not do so, and if Reagan's safety net fails to catch all those who were assisted by the humane reformers of the 1960s and 1970s (which seems all too likely), then the only alternative will be a return to the economies of scale found in the snakepits of the 19th century.

Dropping the Helmsman.

The Chinese After Mao

by John Fraser

The "official" report on the historical role of Chairman Mao Zedong released last June by the Chinese Communist party is the sort of document too easily dismissed in the West by those who like their communism monolithic and irredeemable. But it has an immense importance to the Chinese people, and outsiders must recognize its significance for China's future if we are to come to terms with this extraordinary nation during a new era of shifting alliances and changing values.

At first glance, the report would seem simply to be the final latch shut tight on Mao's crystal sarcophagus in T'ien An Men Square. As a revolutionary leader and founder of New China, the Great Helmsman is given a warm salute, and his "errors"—particularly in conceiving and leading the destructive Cultural Revolution—are exorcised thoroughly, if not exactly forthrightly. The Chinese people are urged to emulate the better spirit of Mao and to forgive his transgressions against them because the accomplishments were so much more important.

This balanced and pragmatic view took nearly 15 months of often bitter negotiations to hammer out, and it brought with it the political demise of Mao's handpicked successor, Hua Guofeng. But it should not be dismissed simply as yet another example of palace intrigue from the current masters of the Forbidden City. To be sure, it contains elements of such intrigue, but there was something much more involved, because Mao Zedong was not just another Chinese leader. In dealing with Mao, both the current party leadership and the Chinese people as a whole have had to deal with themselves first, and this has been neither a comfortable nor a fully successful exercise.

The first thing to realize is that when the Chinese Communist party speaks for "the broad masses of the Chinese people," it is actually only speaking for a minority. At the moment, it can't even speak for all of its 50 million members; factionalism is a constant and distinguishing feature. Yet the party still has a number of assets. It works within a totalitarian system that buttresses power-holders. It can count on the special patriotism of the Chinese people, who usually rally behind a central force—any central force—that offers independence and national integrity. And it can rely on the disposition of many Chinese to accept the status quo. These were among the elements that Chairman Mao brought together at the beginning of his historic campaign to reunite China and free it of foreign domination. The commonly perceived sense of Mao's personal commitment and his party's moral commitment to such ideals won over many non-Communists during the civil war and especially during the period of national reconstruction after Mao's victory in 1949.

In learning of the faith and hope invested in the party and in Mao himself, one comes to understand the kind of resentment many Chinese people will feel at the party's most recent effort to set the historical record straight. There are too many witnesses to this particular bit of history who themselves have experienced much that will never be forgiven. In the final communiqué issued by the party's Central Committee

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John Fraser is the author of *The Chinese: Portrait of a People* (Summit Books).

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last June, an attempt was made to sum up:

> The resolution [of the Central Committee] scientifically analyzes the rights and wrongs in the party's guiding ideology, analyzes the subjective factors and social cancer that gives rise to mistakes, realistically evaluates the historical role of Comrade Mao Zedong, the great leader and teacher, in the Chinese revolution and fully elaborates the great significance of Mao Zedong thought as the guiding ideology of our party.

Unless it is simple cynicism, this is all whistling into the wind. For the purposes of its own legitimacy and as the price of some sort of consistency, the current government is required to nurture a scaled-down version of Chairman Mao, even though it rejects nearly everything from his legacy except New China itself. Had there been any real faith that Mao's essential political philosophy held any practical use for China, and had Vice-Chairman Deng Xiaoping and his camp followers seen any use in the Mao connection besides lip service, then Chairman Hua Guofeng would never have been put through such humiliation.

OF COURSE, it is perfect nonsense for the party disciplinarians to say now that Hua was guilty of erroneous leftist thinking and of encouraging his own personality cult. Hua was instrumental in destroying the radical Maoist faction when he purged the Gang of Four, and no one in the party leadership was trying harder to assimilate Vice-Chairman Deng's new order than Hua himself. He traveled ideological light-years in the 20 short months from Deng's reemergence to the normalization of relations between China and the United States. During some of the fiercest factional fighting of the Cultural Revolution, a number of Red Guard units were accused of "raising the red banner of Chairman Mao only to attack Chairman Mao." In other words, even as you sing the praises of your leader, you set about destroying him to achieve your own objectives. That is what is being done in China today. We would be entitled to dismiss it all, along with the disputatious historical evaluation of Mao, as the ranting of the latest pack of monsters to inflict themselves upon the Chinese people, were it not for one fact: the current government offers the best chance China has had for survival and progress in a quarter-century. In this singular fact, there is more than irony involved. Out of a bitter heritage of authoritarianism, there appears to be emerging some elements of fairness and justice.

A cautionary tale I heard recently offers an illustration of how the inequities of the past that were once deemed revolutionary are now being declared by the government what they really always were: crimes against the Chinese people. Six months ago, a 34-year-old Chinese musician from the Central Opera and Ballet Institute of Peking was arrested by the Public Security Bureau and charged with a number of crimes which included receiving stolen state property, illegally transporting that property outside the country, and making unauthorized sales to a foreigner. Under the recently reformed Chinese criminal code, it is official etiquette to refer to such crimes as being "alleged" until guilt has been determined. In fact, and in accord with previous practice, the man's fate was sealed the moment he was arrested, for the police would never have made the move if they weren't sure of his guilt. Especially on a relatively small-scale criminal matter, if there is any serious doubt about the guilt of a suspect, the Public Security Bureau generally will hold back. The system has a certain amount of charm for litigation-weary Westerners who do not see the evil side until the crimes in question are decreed political or counterrevolutionary.

In any event, the Public Security Bureau had done its homework in the case of the musician. Indeed, some of those who knew the man wondered why the arrest had been so long in coming. It was easily ascertained what stolen goods were involved (antique artifacts nipped from various museums). On a cultural exchange visit to Hong Kong, the man had been observed by colleagues making contact with antique dealers, and upon his return home he had suspicious amounts of pocket money and was laden with Western trinkets and gadgets (especially digital watches and small tape-decks).

HIS ARREST, trial, and subsequent four-year prison sentence did not receive wide publicity. I only heard of the case from some of the man's colleagues who were visiting the United States and whom I knew when I lived in Peking. Because of my personal experience with the Public Security Bureau and the way it perceives enemies of the state, my initial reaction was cynical. "How did they manage this frame-up?" I asked the Chinese who told me the tale. Their response was immediate and vociferous: "Justice," they agreed, "has finally caught up with Ko Xuewen."

Ko Xuewen was not only a child of the revolution, someone who knew nothing personally of life in China before Mao; he was also the child of a high party and administration figure. His father had risen to one of the top posts in the strategic Tibetan regional government during the 1960s. Until recently Tibet has been run as a virtual military colony, and it is safe to assume that no one achieved high office there without thorough knowledge of power in China and an equally thorough measure of trust from the central authorities. As the scion of this trust and authority, young Ko benefited from all the privileges such rank is heir to: better education, better living conditions, better food, more travel opportunities, and so on. He was apparently one of those universal types who are beneficiaries of "the system," rather than its servant or victim. Here politics and ideology are irrelevant: it is a question of class and privilege. In China, as anywhere else, privilege produces several responses. Some, albeit a minority, transcend privilege and manage to turn themselves into dutiful and selfless exemplars of

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society; others, like Ko, are nasty little spoiled brats whose arrogance is matched by a lack of moral decency.

Ko and his family seem to have survived the vagaries of the Cultural Revolution without undue hardship. Perhaps his father's position in a key strategic area had something to do with this, although it is true that for all the high officials who were supposed to have fallen from grace during the Cultural Revolution, most managed to hang in there employing much the same tactics as the clergyman in the English folksong, the vicar of Bray, who shifted theological allegiances within the Church of England for at least 300 years and eight verses. By pulling strings (or by going through "the back door," as they say in China), Ko got into the Musical Institute, of which he was a perfunctory member. Everything he accomplished since then could be ascribed to a position eventually taken for granted. He was hated by his colleagues, but they didn't complain much about him. His cruelty and vindictiveness during the Cultural Revolution were just something "best left forgotten."

Thus it is not surprising that young Ko quickly took advantage of the historic shift that accompanied Vice-Chairman Deng's rise to power, especially the increased opportunities for contacts with the West and foreigners in general. According to some of his colleagues, Ko's sloppiness about covering his tracks only shows how habitual his arrogance had become and how much he took his privileges for granted. If you ever visit China and want to discover precisely what sort of person your travel guide or interpreter is, ask him (or her) what he thinks of the abuses of the bureaucratic class. Don't be frightened to ask the question or feel that it is rude; it is posed almost daily in the official press. If the guide denies such abuses occur, you know you are talking to someone whose brains have been transformed into millet gruel by ideological struggle; if he acknowledges the abuses, you very likely will enter into a lively debate which could give you some idea of what it is like to be a Chinese in China today.

THAT IS WHY Deng Xiaoping and his friends are fooling no one when they talk about Mao's role in Chinese history. The Chinese today are left to cope with Mao's immediate legacy, and there is not much time to honor or deplore it: one must simply survive it. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, China suffered a series of setbacks. Some were natural—floods and drought bringing on widescale starvation and misery—and some were the products of erroneous Communist planning, such as the Great Leap Forward, which added to the starvation and misery. Because the two were related, and also because it was a point of honor for Mao and his party, no international appeals to aid the beleaguered masses were made. Spiritual fences were raised and it was virtually impossible to get accurate news of this spectacular series of disasters until years afterward. What was the reason for all this? Who benefited? China emerged as an allegedly self-reliant nation, but the price of the image was awesome. One always pointed to India with a sad shake of the head at the chaos and misery, and then hailed China for its "third world" example of transcending all this. It was mostly bunk, but the Indian government didn't have the means to control the flow of bad information that the Chinese Communist party had. Nor did India benefit from the idealism of many well-intentioned Western observers who wanted to believe that something in Mao's dour and often dreaded regime made it worthwhile. Thus arose the myth of self-reliance and self-sufficiency.

TODAY CHINA is going through another difficult period of natural disasters. Drought and flooding in many areas, including the heavily populated Szechwan province, have already killed thousands of people, and the death toll will rise. This time, however, we know most of the details because the government has not only supplied them but also requested international assistance. There are actually people in the West who see in that request a sign of the moral rot that has set in with Mao's successors. It is, of course, a welcome sign of maturity and common sense, and an indication that the Communist party no longer intends to make ordinary Chinese suffer silently to preserve the dignity of ideology. By asking for a helping hand, the Chinese Communist party has made far more than a gesture to its people; it has formally announced that it is imperfect in an imperfect world. The acceptance of interdependence is one of the sanest signs out of China in a long time. That is also why the matter-of-fact sentencing of a man who made a career of lording it over his colleagues to the point of criminality is so encouraging. The current government is still frightened by the judgment of its own people, as the vicious sentencing of human rights activists in 1979 showed. But this is also an area that appears to be changing. It is not naive to expect better things from the Communist party of China; it is what Chinese people themselves expect. The party is obliged to respond, and knows it.

As for Chairman Mao and his role in history, a Chinese acquaintance expressed it the best I ever heard—at least as an interim assessment. "The Chinese people," he said, "owe a very great debt to Chairman Mao for liberating our country and helping the Chinese people to stand with pride in the world. During the early years of national reconstruction, he was a symbol of the best things we wanted for our country and ourselves. After 1957, when he began a series of corrosive mass political campaigns, and especially during the Cultural Revolution, Chairman Mao willfully used the Chinese people in personal experiments, so it is also true to say that Chairman Mao owes the Chinese people a great debt. Now he is dead. Now his debt is paid to us and ours to him. Now we must try hard to leave him to history and work toward the future."

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Books and the Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Sons of Riches

American film-distribution methods often butcher films that might prosper, or at least get more attention, with intelligent handling. Occasionally enough of a ruckus is raised about a botch to get a film a second chance. It has happened now with a picture called *Cutter's Way*, which was released three months ago as *Cutter and Bone* and which zipped through before I had a chance to see it. I'm glad that its enthusiasts made a fuss and brought about its re-release: otherwise I'd always have felt I'd missed a good one. Now I know that it isn't.

Cutter's Way was directed by Ivan Passer, a Czech émigré who secured a small corner in the Permanent Gallery with an exquisite film called *Intimate Lighting* (*TNR*, January 17, 1970), made in 1965 in his native country. Passer has been in the US since about 1970 and, I think, has made five films here. The ones I saw previously, including *Law and Disorder*, were so poor that I thought I'd just leave him alone out of respect for *Intimate Lighting*. The *Cutter's Way* fuss persuaded me to have another look at his American work. It's smoothly enough made, but it's repellent: and what repels, strange though it may sound about a director in his late 40s, is its juvenility.

What has happened to Passer has happened before to foreign-born directors trying to slice in, trying to cut to the American moral quick, to lay bare our "real" trouble and our "real" hope. The "truth" many of them discover is that, in moral terms, the US is divided into three sectors: a great, bland, malleable middle bordered by, on the one side, cruel tycoons who live by money and manipulation of the middle and, on the other side, dropouts—literal or figurative—who have seen through the corruption at the top, are not going to be manipulated, who are not going to do anything much except *be*—be unmanipulated. By virtue of negation, these dropouts, predominantly young of course, are the only moral hope in the country.

Think of Antonioni with *Zabriskie Point*, Karel Reisz with *Who'll Stop the Rain?*, Milos Forman with *Taking Off*. This adolescent simplism touches native directors, too (for instance, Arthur Penn with *Night Moves*), but it seems to flourish most easily among newcomers, who are fiercely defensive against being taken in by the Establishment, who don't want to be suckered by mass-media pap but who end up being just as easily suckered, if differently, by the hanging-out crowd, the laid-back, the rolling stoned.

Cutter's Way has one novelty: a maimed Vietnam veteran. Alex Cutter, played by John Heard, is one-eyed, one-armed, one-legged, a hobbling, hot-mouthed, ever-present reminder of past American sins. I use the gross term "novelty" because the character is exploited, cinematically and dramatically, and because his dialogue stinks of an angry sophomore's typewriter. All through the film we are conscious that the complex horror of Vietnam is being reduced to visual and verbal sloganeering. The sheer utilization of moral profundities is capped at the end when—you are not misreading—Cutter rides a white horse through the window of a villainous tycoon's mansion, killing himself in the smash.

The script, by Jeffrey Alan Fiskin from a novel by Newton Thornburg, is about two Santa Barbara pals: Cutter, who is married and apparently lives on his pension, and Richard Bone, played by Jeff Bridges, a part-time yacht salesman and, ostensibly, part-time gigolo. The film opens with Bone in a luxe hotel room with a woman, the gleaming Nina Van Pallandt, asking her for money after a bout. This makes you think you're going to see another *American Gigolo*, but this opening is false: studding is not subsequently shown to be part of Bone's vocation or avocation or of the story's development. It's just an opening dollop of moral grunge that Passer wants to lay on us.

That night Bone accidentally witnesses the disposal of a murdered girl in a garbage can, and a day or so later, he spots the grand marshal of a parade as the man who did it. This man is—natch—a rich big shot. Cutter, when he hears all this, insists that Bone press the matter. Cutter's plan is for Bone to write the biggie a blackmail letter; then, when the murderer tries to pay off, they'll turn the evidence over to the police who will be forced to act. The flaw in this plan, which your little nephew Willie would spot at once, never hits these clever types. The moment the tycoon—a man capable of tossing a girl's body into a garbage can—is threatened, he responds, not with money but with violence.

This plot stupidity is only a sample of the hip dullness with which the whole film is seen and written, dullness further exemplified by the long, druggy, sagacious meanderings of Cutter's wife, Lisa Eichhorn. I don't question the verism of people like these; I'm sure they exist in their thousands. But if these negative nerds, smug in their inactivity, are our best hope against the corporate tyrants—in fact, if America's moral agon consists *only* of a struggle against those tyrants—then we're in

Films Worth Seeing

The Great Muppet Caper. Well, maybe it's *not* great, but it's the Muppets, capering.

Heart to Heart. A tender but far from saccharine film about three Parisian sisters learning love. Anne Caudry is enchanting.

Numero Deux. Jean-Luc Godard making aesthetic disturbances again, verbally somewhat tiresome, visually often illuminating.

Stevie. Glenda Jackson, as the poet Stevie Smith, and Mona Washbourne, as her adored aunt, help to make this small English film a small gem with a gem's inner light.

SK

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for even a worse time than I fear.

Passer, doubtless outraged by much that he has seen in the US, has, like Antonioni and others, been misled because he is fundamentally a tourist, fallen into the hands of guides with outrageously easy answers, and he has no American cultural knowledge of his own to right him. (Fellini once said that he wouldn't make films in America because he didn't know how Americans hold their cigarettes when they smoke.) Passer's insecurity has betrayed him into directorial heavinesss of the 1960s Czech school which he had managed to avoid in his own country because there he knew where, in every sense, he stood. The slow-motion parade under the credits; the string of white horses that inexplicably pass Bone's car on a Santa Barbara avenue at night (from a rodeo? a circus? Anyway, they are a forecast of the ending); the bizarre lighting in the detective's office—all these are off the lower shelves of the Prague Film School. The cinematography that Passer has encouraged in Jordan Cronenweth is imitation Vilmos Zsigmond, a general bath in golden syrup, irrespective of the scenes or theme.

More about US riches and poverty. You thought, did you, that you would never see another comedy about a bibulous zillionaire playboy who is supposed to marry a girl in his own set but who falls in love with a poor-but-honest waitress? You thought those films had gone with Franchot Tone and Robert Montgomery?

Ha.

Arthur brings that playboy back again more bibulous and, in 1981, more openly sexual but essentially the same. He even has that eccentric grandparent (Geraldine Fitzgerald this time) who holds the purse strings. The only near twist is that, in this version, the playboy manages to keep both his money and his proletarian love.

Arthur has spots of amusement, one of which is not Liza Minnelli's performance as the waitress. She manages to turn any moment, any place—a Queens kitchen, for instance—into Las Vegas show biz full of "heart." Dudley Moore is deft, if at too great length, as the drinking charmer. Ted Ross is corpulently neat as his patient chauffeur, and, which was clearly intended from the start, John Gielgud steals the film as Arthur's precise, prickly witted valet-guardian. Coincidence: Stephen Elliott, who plays the tough tycoon in *Cutter's Way*, plays a tough tycoon here, the jilted girl's father. He even keeps a stable as in the other picture. (Same horses?)

The script is by Steve Gordon, who didn't fuss much about plot but who wrote some exceptionally nimble dialogue. His wit and timing, so far, are mostly verbal; since he directed the picture, too, that limitation hurts. He often doesn't know when a bit is too slow or is going on too long. *Arthur* is a balloon that Writer Gordon inflates with bright lightness and that Director Gordon tends to drag down.

Michael Ullman on jazz

Lee Konitz

When I talked to Lee Konitz last summer, he was still smarting from two ill-advised reviews of his performances at Carnegie Hall several nights before. The alto saxophonist took part in the Newport/New York festival "Tribute to Fred Astaire," and he made two extemporaneous comments between numbers: first he said he wanted to play the way Fred sang; then, hesitating before starting a ballad, he joked that he hadn't played this one before. The piece was Cole Porter's "I Concentrate on You," the title tune of one of Konitz's recent records. Ignoring Konitz's nine-minute recorded version of Porter's song, reviewers attributed some roughness in the concert to inadequate rehearsals, using Konitz's joke as evidence. The concert's producers were predictably upset.

So was Konitz. A naturally witty and literate man—his version of "Body and Soul" is entitled "Figure and Spirit"—Konitz felt that the misunderstanding was suggestive of some more general problem. He wasn't getting his message across: not with his wit or, perhaps, adequately with his music. Why else should he be laboring in relative obscurity after more than 30 years as a professional musician? This restless self-criticism and self-examination may be a legacy from his one-time mentor, Lennie Tristano. Like Tristano, Konitz pitilessly edited his early recording until only the essence of his art remained. But the emphasis on communication is Konitz's own.

Born in 1927, Konitz started on clarinet when he was 11; by the time he was 15, he was out on the road playing clarinet with an obscure dance band. He was introduced to an intriguing kind of jazz when he heard Lennie Tristano in a small club in Chicago. A gifted pianist whose improvisations helped introduce the "cool school," Tristano became famous as a teacher of jazz musicians and controversial for his innovations, which made his music seem an alternative to the bebop of the 1940s. Tristano felt tyrannized by drummers. While bebop drummers were learning to drop "bombs"—irregularly placed, strong accents—Tristano's accompanists were told to lay off the bass drum. Tristano stressed melodic invention and introduced Bach-like counterpoint to his performances, which generally had less rhythmic energy and finer dynamic contrasts than most bebop dates. In 1949 Tristano, with Konitz and others, ended a productive recording session for Capitol by taping four completely spontaneous improvisations. Only "Intuition" and "Digression" were issued, but they were the earliest free-form pieces that had an impact on the jazz world.

Tristano, as Gerry Mulligan has said, always "had his own thing going; he never came out in the big world." Today, Konitz doesn't remember "specific things that Tristano taught me. It was more a philosophy of art, of art for art's sake." Tristano had what Konitz calls "a scorn for those who went into the marketplace—a philosophy that turned against him—he stopped trying to communicate."

Always curious about various performing opportunities, Konitz has been in the "big world" since he joined Claude Thornhill's band in 1947. He made his first recordings with Thornhill, soloing tartly on an enterprising Gil Evans arrangement of "Anthropology." Gerry Mulligan recalled this recording in 1971: "Lee Konitz, genius. Lee had joined Claude's band in Chicago and knocked us all out (including Bird) with his orig-

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inality." Konitz recorded with the "Birth of the Cool" band fronted by Miles Davis and spent most of 1952 and 1953 with Stan Kenton. He's been performing with small groups ever since, except for a few years during the 1960s, a difficult period for many jazz musicians. "That was a time when people didn't seem to be interested in hearing me play 'All the Things You Are'" is Konitz's only comment about a time when he moved to California and worked as, among other things, a gardener.

People started to be interested again in the late 1960s, particularly after hearing Konitz's unaccompanied solo at a concert commemorating Charlie Parker ("Blues for Bird" on *Charlie Parker: Tenth Memorial Concert*; Trip 5510). Konitz began by mentioning how presumptuous he felt standing alone on the stage of Carnegie Hall and he invited the audience to join in. (No one did.) After an introduction in which he seemed to nudge the melody along ahead of him like a mare her colt, Konitz went on to produce with his salty and unerring melodic touch a carefully keening tribute that was the highlight of the concert.

photo of Lee Konitz by Michael Ullman for *The New Republic*

MOST of Konitz's work has this probing but intimate quality. In the 1940s he'd unravel long strings of eighth notes, barely mentioning the melodies of the songs whose chords he was exploiting. Since then, he has paid closer attention to melody; and his tone, once pure and thin, has thickened. When he wants, as on his recorded version of "I Love Paris," he can give his alto sax the cigarette-ragged, throaty sound of a world-weary chanteuse. Since the middle 1960s he has been relearning solos by the supreme melodists of jazz, recording special tributes to Louis Armstrong, Lester Young, and Roy Eldridge by playing their solos before or after venturing on improvisations of his own. His "Struttin' With Some Barbecue" is a duet with trombonist Marshall Brown: on the last chorus, they play Louis Armstrong's famous chorus, having previously recorded a stop-time background on baritone sax and euphonium which ballasts Armstrong's flights (*The Lee Konitz Duets*; Milestone 9013). Konitz's version of Armstrong's glistening phrases reminds us of the exuberant musicality of the trumpeter's creations. On the same album, Konitz plays duets with saxophonists Joe Henderson and Richie Kamuca, with lyrical guitarist Jim Hall and avant-garde vibraharpist Karl Berger, and, in the most surprising track, he records a free improvisation with trumpeter and violinist Ray Nance, Duke Ellington's "string section." Rejecting the timorous drumming of the Tristano school, Konitz hired Elvin Jones for that date; he told me that he wants to play "with strong rhythm sections: with Elvin Jones, Billy Higgins, Jack DeJohnette, Billy Hart."

Konitz has recorded close to 30 albums since the mid-1960s, including three with the Nonet he led at Stryker's, a small club that used to be on 86th Street near Columbus Avenue in New York City. (Other clubs fade noiselessly away: Stryker's was demolished.) Crammed onto a tiny stage, the group played a discerning collection of ballads as well as modern jazz classics by Wayne Shorter, Chick Corea, John Coltrane, and Charlie Parker. The arrangements were by Konitz, Sy Johnson, and an occasional Konitz student, and they were special. The Nonet's version of "Tea for Two," found on their Roulette record, opens with Konitz's almost straight, weirdly poignant rendition of the verse. He leads into the chorus with a woozy final phrase, and his band plays the singsong melody with a bouncy tenderness that's neither nostalgic nor corny. Everybody in the Nonet soloed. As Konitz said, he paid them so little that he had to offer them something. The band was obviously a labor of love.

Konitz's Nonet was the talk of the town in 1978 and 1979, but it didn't bring him anything like the fame of a Stan Getz. He gave a concert at the small Carnegie Recital Hall, and even that place was too big. Konitz surveyed the crowd, and reminded them that the Pete Seeger concert was next door. (One couple looked accusingly at each other and hustled out.) He teaches and

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performs regularly in Europe, and searches actively for interesting playing situations in this country too. He enjoyed a concert with fellow alto saxophonist Jackie McLean, Konitz said, because he finally found someone who played as sharp as he did.

Konitz has played with big bands and he's played solo, but many of his best recordings have been duets, a format that allows considerable freedom while testing each performer's sensitivity and quickness of reflex. *I Concentrate on You*, performances by Konitz and bassist Red Mitchell of 11 Cole Porter songs, brings out the best in Konitz: his love of fine melody, his endless inventiveness, and the variety of his tones, from the dark sonority he produces on "Easy to Love" to the sprightly sharp feeling of "Just One of Those Things."

These performances are challenging, but they are also appealing. That they haven't reached more people troubles Konitz. Characteristically he blames himself—he's even been studying scientology to improve his techniques of communication. But the problem isn't Konitz's and, one fears, the solution won't be L. Ron Hubbard's. Konitz's music, daring or familiar, charming, spright or mournful, reflects his imposing musical intelligence and often mordant wit. His is a lyrical voice, but the only background music he will ever perform will be his recording of the Warne Marsh piece of that name. Gunther Schuller described Konitz as "a totally dedicated musician, uncompromising and tenacious in the face of adversity, a man who has not lost faith in the original idealism that generated the excitement and ferment of the early bop days." Gerry Mulligan called him a genius and Stan Kenton lamented that he was not better known. Konitz is liable to characterize himself more simply as an out-of-tune saxophonist who still needs a lot of practice. When I asked him his plans for the future, Konitz replied without hesitation, "I'm going to keep working on 'What is This Thing Called Love' until I get it right."

One can hear the Konitz solos that knocked Charlie Parker out on *The Memorable Claude Thornhill* (Columbia KG32906), and Lee Konitz is featured on Kenton's *Sketches on Standards* (Creative World ST1041). *I Concentrate on You* (Steeplechase) may be the best introduction to recent Konitz, though one should also listen to the Nonet records (Chiaroscuro 186, Roulette SR 5006, and Steeplechase 1119). I also like his duets with pianist Hal Galper (Inner City 2057) and Konitz's freer playing with Paul Bley (Pyramid IAI 373845). Konitz's most recent recording is *Seasons Change*, duets with Karl Berger (Circle RK 291079/19; available from Daybreak Express, 169 Seventh Avenue, Brooklyn, New York).

Reconsideration

Ignazio Silone's 'Fontamara'

by Irving Howe

At one point in *Fontamara* the peasants of Fontamara gather in their church to hear a sermon about San Giuseppe da Copertino, a peasant saint who could never learn his Latin but honored the Virgin Mary in his own way: by turning somersaults. When San Giuseppe arrived in heaven, God told him he could have anything he wished. The poor saint wondered, "Can I ask for anything?" Let Silone continue:

> 'Anything at all,' answered the Eternal Father, encouraging him. 'I run things up here in Heaven. Up here I can do anything I feel like. I really like you, and anything you want, you can have.'
>
> But San Giuseppe da Copertino didn't dare make his request. He was afraid that his immodest desires would make God angry. Only after God had insisted and given His word of honor that He wouldn't be angry, the saint asked for what he wanted.
>
> 'Lord, I want a nice big piece of white bread.
>
> God kept his word and did not get angry, but embraced the holy peasant and wept with him for a long time.

Now, here is essentially the same anecdote in a Yiddish story by I. L. Peretz, called "Bontsha the Silent." A meek, little man, Bontsha arrives before the heavenly tribunal. The prosecutor begins to speak but can find nothing to say against him, and the judge tells Bontsha that "for you there is everything." Let Peretz continue:

> 'Really?' Bontsha asks again, and now his voice is stronger, more assured.
>
> And the judge and all the heavenly host answered, 'Really! Really! Really!'
>
> 'Well then'—and Bontsha smiles for the first time—'well, then, what I would like, your Excellency, is to have, every morning for breakfast, a hot roll with fresh butter.'
>
> A silence falls upon the great hall, and it is more terrible than Bontsha's has ever been, and slowly the judge and the angels bend their heads in shame at this unending meekness they have created on earth.
>
> Then the silence is shattered. The pros-

This essay will appear as the introduction to the Signet Classic edition of Eric Mosbacher's translation of *Fontamara*. © 1980 by the New American Library, Inc. *Irving Howe* teaches literature at CUNY.

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NIGHT TAXI

For Rod Taylor,
wherever he is

Open city
uncluttered as a map.
I drive through empty streets
scoured by the winds
of midnight. My shift
is only beginning and I am fresh
and excitable, master of the taxi.
I relish my alert reflexes
where all else
is in hiding. I have
by default it seems
conquered me a city.

My first address: I
press the doorbell, I lean back
against the hood, my headlights
scalding a garage door, my engine
drumming in the driveway,
the only sound on the block.
There the fare finds me
like a date, jaunty,
shoes shined, I am
proud of myself, on my toes,
obliging but not subservient.

I take short cuts, picking up
speed, from time to time
I switch on the dispatcher's
litany of addresses,
China Basin to Twin Peaks,
Harrison Street to the Ocean.

I am thinking tonight
my fares are like affairs
—no, more like tricks to turn:
quick, lively, ending up
with a cash payment.
I do not anticipate a holdup.
I can make friendly small talk.
I do not go on about Niggers,
women drivers or the Chinese.
It's all on my terms but
I let them think it's on theirs.

Do I pass through the city
or does it pass through me?
I know I have to be loose,
like my light embrace of the wheel,
loose but in control
—though hour by hour I tighten
minutely in the routine,
smoking my palate to ash,
till the last hour of all
will be drudgery, nothing else.

I zip down Masonic Avenue,
the taxi sings beneath the streetlights
a song to the bare city, it is
my instrument, I woo with it,
bridegroom and conqueror.

I jump out to open the door,
fixing the cap on my head
to, you know, firm up my role,
and on my knuckle
feel a sprinkle of wet.

Glancing upward I see
high above the lamppost
but touched by its farthest light
a curtain of rain already blowing
against black eucalyptus tops.

Thom Gunn

ecutor laughs aloud, a bitter laugh.

It is a striking parallel. Both writers draw upon folktales, obscure in origin but evidently shared by a number of European cultures. The folktales themselves appear to affirm the value of passive suffering as a necessary part of our existence—something that neither Silone nor Peretz does. Peretz, since his entire story is merely an elaboration of the folktale, has to place his judgment within the story, in the last two paragraphs: the heavenly host bowing "in shame at this unending meekness they have created on earth." Silone, because he encases the anecdote in a larger narrative, repeats it without any immediate comment—for the whole of *Fontamara* can be read as a comment on the story of San Giuseppe, challenging the traditional Christian view that "the life of the men, the beasts and the land seemed fixed in an inflexible circle."

Peretz and Silone appear at a moment in history when the idea of saintly passivity is under attack, among the East European Jews by the rise of secular politics and among the Italians by the claims of radicalism. Yet the strength of both *Fontamara* and "Bontsha the Silent" derives partly from the bond their authors still feel with the exemplary figures of San Giuseppe and Bontsha, pure in their yielding.

A NEW world-view controls these writers' work. For what is at stake here is not just sympathy for the poor and the oppressed—that, after all, can be found in various Judeo-Christian traditions, among the Franciscans, the Hasidim, and others. What is strikingly new is the persuasion, evidently stronger in Silone than Peretz, that injustice need not be seen as inherent in the nature of things. Made by man, injustice can be removed by man. Commonplace as this may now seem, we should remember that it is a notion historically conditioned, historically novel. In the 200 years or so since it first appeared in Western culture, it has been a profoundly revolutionary force transforming human consciousness.

A new vision of human solidarity also makes itself felt. In all his fictions Ignazio Silone—heterodox socialist, unchurched Christian—sought to give meaning to this solidarity with the neglected and speechless, first in their suffering, then in their rebellion, and, if rebellion proves to be impossible, at least in their gestures of residual dignity. Let me use, for a moment, a Marxist category Silone would have accepted at the time he wrote *Fontamara* (1930) but later would have shifted in the direction of his "primitive Christianity": the human creature—even the lowliest *cafoni* (landless peasant) trapped beneath the social structure—now brings to an end his centuries-long submission; he ceases to be an object, something upon which history acts, and declares himself a subject, someone who acts upon history.

In a luminous sketch, "Visits to a Prisoner," Silone recalls an incident from his childhood. Standing in front of his house, he once saw "a small, barefoot, ragged little man" being dragged down

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the streets of his village in the Abruzzi, a poverty-stricken mountain region lying east of Rome. "Look how funny he is," the boy said to his father.

> My father looked severely at me, dragged me to my feet by the ear and led me to his room. I had never seen him so angry at me.
>
> 'What have I done wrong?' I asked him, rubbing my injured ear.
>
> 'Never make fun of a man who's been arrested. Never!'
>
> 'Why not?'
>
> 'Because he can't defend himself. And because he may be innocent. In any case, because he's unhappy.'

This little anecdote yields an entire ethical perspective. We are asked to concern ourselves not just with the victim, but also with the man who runs afoul of the law: the criminal perhaps, the outlaw probably, the rebel certainly. This is only an inch or two away from Berardo Viola, the "hero" of *Fontamara*, as he turns from his anarchic taste for violence, still individualistic and unplanned, to a new awareness of class interest, class solidarity. He makes this turning in response to the ordeal of the Fontamara peasants, their *Via Crucis*, as Silone calls it. (Note the Christian reference even in the socialist lesson!) "And if I die," says Berardo in prison, "it will be the first time a peasant dies not for himself but for someone else." In its rejection of passivity, this may seem far from San Giuseppe and Bontsha; but in its readiness for sacrifice, perhaps it is not so far.

THERE is a poignant biographical basis to the character of Berardo. In April 1928 Silone's younger brother, Romolo, then 24 years old, was arrested by the fascist police. Not very much interested in politics and a good Catholic, Romolo was trying to reach Switzerland in order to escape the fascists, who had been harassing him because of his older brother's political activities. Arrested, Romolo suddenly heard himself accused of being a ringleader in an attempt to assassinate King Victor Emmanuel III, the ineffectual monarch who had made his peace with Mussolini. The whole thing was a frame-up, Romolo reacted with complete bewilderment, and he was severely beaten by Mussolini's thugs. Brought to trial, Romolo was convicted, not of attempted assassination, but simply of belonging to the Italian Communist party—though, in fact, he did not. He was sentenced to 12 years in prison and died there in 1932. His victimization was a torment to Silone, who in Berardo created a figure of fervor and independence to honor his younger brother. From prison Romolo wrote to Silone: "I tried to behave as I imagined you would have behaved in my place."

IN 1930 Silone—sick, hunted, lonely, depressed—was living as a refugee in Switzerland. He had gone through a disheartening experience as a leader of the antifascist underground in Italy, seeing it shattered by Mussolini's agents and deserted by old comrades grown weary and afraid. He meanwhile had become increasingly disenchanted with the Communist movement, which he had joined a decade earlier when the Italian party was formed. But he continued to believe, as he would throughout his life, in the values of socialism and solidarity with the oppressed. He wrote *Fontamara* almost, one gathers, as an exercise in moral therapy, out of feelings among which it must have been impossible to separate despair from a will to hope. He wrote less as the individual artist expressing an individual vision, more as a spokesman for a generation beaten and baffled, clinging with its fingertips to the edge of an ideal.

Fontamara itself could not, of course, be published in Italy. In 1933, through private subscription, it came out in a German translation in Switzerland, and a year later in an English translation in the United States. Not until 1949, almost three decades after its composition, was there an edition in Italy. And even that met with a somewhat grudging reception, since it was hard for those Italians who unheroically had kept afloat through the years of fascism to speak generously of a writer noted for heroic resistance to the dictatorship, and it was hard for critics trained in a narrow belletristic tradition to get past the "roughness" of Silone's style in order to grasp the bracing humor and moral lucidity of the book.

In the 1930s, however, *Fontamara* won acclaim throughout the world. Leon Trotsky wrote a fervent notice saying that in this book revolutionary passion had been raised to serious art. Intellectuals of the left, as well as many who simply responded to the radiance of Silone's mind, found in him a friend, a companion in hard times. Once he published his masterpiece, *Bread and Wine*, in 1937, Silone became a culture-hero for those of us who hated all forms of dictatorship, whether fascist or Communist, yet held to a vision of democratic social transformation.

Silone was a political man, entirely so before becoming an artist and partly or intermittently afterward. He came from a family of small farmers living in the mountain village of Pescina in the Abruzzi (a village that served as model for Fontamara). He learned in his boyhood to share the feeling of the peasants that the whole of society—and (who knows?) perhaps the very structure of the universe—forms a conspiracy against the lowly: a conspiracy joined by government, church, cities, politicians, lawyers, all those who have money and all those who use words. At the age of 16 he was arrested after joining a badly organized action by the peasants of his district. About the same time he joined the Socialist Youth League of Italy, and for the next decade and a half politics was his meat and drink. It signified, as he thought, an effort to realize through mundane action the values imbedded in his consciousness by stories of Christian sharing and sacrifice, stories still kept alive, though more and more precariously, in the peasant culture.

When the Communist party of Italy

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was formed in 1921 by Gramsci, Bordiga, and Togliatti, the young Silone, representing the Socialist youth movement, joined with them, impatient with Social Democratic hesitations, zealous for an ideology of the absolute. Later he served as a leader of the underground, experiencing failures he would recall in *Bread and Wine*. In 1927 he went with Togliatti to Moscow, where both rebelled a little against a demand of Stalin that they sign a denunciation of Trotsky's views concerning the Chinese revolution (a subject about which they knew next to nothing). They were asked to sign this statement without even having read the document by Trotsky they were to declare heretical. Silone refused. He remained a member of the Italian Communist party for another four years, but with increasing reservations and lengthening periods of withdrawal. For him these were years of ill health, loneliness, intellectual confusion, and, finally, a break from the party. The rest of his life Silone devoted to writing novels, essays, and plays, though at the end of World War II he participated for a time in the revived Italian Socialist movement.

HE was a transforming presence: the least bitter of anti-Communists, the most reflective of radical democrats. He saw nihilism as the deepest and most dangerous disease of the 20th century, to be combatted not with high-sounding declarations of faith but with particular acts of community which, in their very doing, justified life. Personally he was subject to periods of depression, from which he seems to have rescued himself by working on his books. In the postwar years he had a reputation of being morose and inaccessible, though the few times I met him I found him amusing, keen, and friendly. The wry humor of *Fontamara*, the humor of a man who has experienced defeat, tasted its dregs, and still survived, kept slipping in and out of his conversation.

Silone has written, "I would willingly pass my life writing and rewriting the same book—that one book that every writer carries within him, the image of his own soul, and of which his published works are only more or less approximate fragments." His "one book" has always been a story of how the mute gain speech or, in another turning, discover the resources of new, more honest speech; always a story about the search for that solidarity which alone makes bearable our suffering; always a story about some redeeming gesture of selfhood or defiance against the tyranny of the given; always a story cast in the form of an apparently simple fable or anecdote. Silone's characters, as R. W. B. Lewis has nicely put it, "exchange anecdotes like gifts: it is all they have, but everything. If genuine life is communion, according to Silone, its seed is the anecdote . . . The role of fiction, like the end of life, is [for him] to be companionable."

JUST as Fontamara's peasants like to hear the legend of San Giuseppe da Copertino repeated over and over again because it yields them some comfort, so Silone has wanted to keep returning to his "one book," that story retold with variations and afterthoughts, because he sees the act of writing as part of a continuous exchange among men and women. This habit of revising his work is by no means unusual among writers; James did it, Manzoni did it, and so, of course, have many poets. In this edition of *Fontamara* the distinguished translator Eric Mosbacher has used the version Silone issued in Italy after World War II. It represents Silone's final, considered idea of what the book should be.

This is not the place, nor am I the person, to discuss the changes Silone made from the first to the second version. Some of them were minor, such as the omission of factual details he had put into the first version; some more important, such as the relative highlighting of the rebellious character Berardo. But about one matter, misconstrued in earlier American commentaries on *Fontamara*, we should be clear. In the English translation of Silone's first version, at the climactic point at which the peasants issue their own little paper, the phrase, "What is to be done?" is steadily repeated, as if to echo the title of Lenin's famous 1902 pamphlet. In the present translation of the second version, the translator has chosen to render this phrase as, "What are we to do?" This still allows for a recall, though fainter, of Lenin's phrase. But it should be stressed that in both of Silone's Italian versions, the phrase is exactly the same: *che fare*. Silone, in his own thinking, did of course move very far from Lenin, but the question that the peasants ask in their desperation remains, for them and millions of others, urgent.

In most of Silone's work, the basic units of narrative are the fable and, on a smaller scale, the anecdote. Snobbish critics have written that Silone brought no new techniques to modern fiction, meaning, I suppose, that he has not been visibly influenced by the techniques of modernism. That is true, but it is not important. For just as the originality of some 20th-century painters consists in going backward to primitive sources, so the originality of Silone consists in a return to pre-novelistic kinds of fiction. *Fontamara* is at once a realistic work, certainly in its depiction of peasant life, and also somewhat akin to the fable, recalling what Malcolm Cowley has described as "the group of medieval fables that deal with the peasants and the Devil." (Here the Devil is "the Trader.") When a policeman says to the people of Fontamara, "You're peasants. You were made to suffer," this may strain our sense of verisimilitude, unless Italian policemen are very different from American. So too may the answer the Fontamarans give the fascist leader who asks them, "What are you for?" Things become a little too neat and pointed here for ordinary realism, but when placed against the tradition of the fable, these elements of the story seem appropriate. A fable is meant to be exemplary, a stripped story declaring markedly the lineaments of its moral.

On the realistic side *Fontamara* owes something to the 19th-century Italian writer Giovanni Verga, a master of naturalism and acknowledged by Silone as a major influence. Verga's fictions are denser in their depiction of actuality than Silone's; they seem more severe and impersonal in their naturalistic detail. But the line of descent from Verga is as clear as the line of descent from oral storytelling and Christian legend. Yoking the two in a form of his own, Silone has made a modest innovation in the techniques of modern fiction.

WHAT holds together the realistic matter and fablelike form is Silone's own voice, wry, pained, sadly humorous. "God ordered that a new species of lice was to come after every great revolution." Or: "It is known that the lawyers around our town have trousers called accordion trousers . . . especially made for banquets. Such trousers have three flies instead of one so that they can be gradually let out as the belly feels the need." And then the brilliant section in which the peasants answer the fascist's question, "What are you for?" Hardly understanding what the fascist wants from them, the peasants nevertheless give wonderfully acute answers;

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but the acuteness has to be seen by the reader as, in part at least, a function of the commanding fable. The peasant who shouts hurrah for the dead queen is put down as a "constitutionalist"; the peasant who says "down with thieves," as an anarchist; the peasant who praises "the legitimate government," as a traitor; the peasant who opts for "the illegitimate government," as a rascal; and, funniest of all, the peasant who cries, "Long live everybody!" as a liberal. Clearly it is Silone's own wit that is here at work, straining perhaps the limits of realism but beautifully satisfying the needs of fable.

One way to read *Fontamara* is as a series of blundering explorations by the long-exploited peasants into the life of the town—no longer to pursue connections with the priest who is corrupt and bloated; nor with the old landowners who are being squeezed by Mussolini's agents yet remain as much as ever the enemies of the peasants; nor with the liberal lawyer, Don Circostanza, who betrays them with his windy rhetoric. Only when the most violent of the peasants, Berardo Viola—it's significant that he owns no land and is therefore free of the conservative inclinations that constrain even those peasants who have no more than a strip of rock—goes to Rome does he meet, after a series of tragicomic blunders, the agent of the revolutionary underground. At the end, a union has been achieved—hesitant, not fully understood, quickly broken—between peasant and worker. *Fontamara* is one of the very few works of modern fiction that absorbs the Marxist outlook on the level of myth or legend, one of the few in which the Marxist categories seem "natural," not in the sense of arising spontaneously from peasant experience, but in the sense that the whole weight of the peasant experience, as it takes form in this book, requires at least a conditional acceptance of these categories. The Solitary Stranger, as he emerges from the political underground, brings to the peasants a polygraph, the product of urban technology, and they print an issue of a little paper. As one of them, Scarpone, explains in a masterful grasp of political method, the question, What can we do? must be asked again and again, after each statement of their plight. "'They've taken away our water! What can we do?' 'They rape our women in the name of the law! What can we do?' 'Don Circostanza's good for nothing! What can we do?'"

Fontamara seems so poignant a political fable because Silone is a patient writer, acutely aware of the difference between what exists and what he wants. The peasants are shown in their nonpolitical actuality and the political actuality is shown as it advances upon them, threatening to starve and destroy them. Silone does not assume the desired relationship between the two, he simply shows the possibilities for reaching it. The political ideas behind *Fontamara* resemble the lines signifying longitude and latitude on a map; they are not the reality, not the mountains and plains and oceans; but they are necessary for locating oneself among the mountains and plains and oceans; they are what gives the geography of society meaning and perspective.

What can we do? That question rings through the spaces of modern history. It leads to small victories, more often large defeats. But one thing is certain: "This unending meekness [that the heavens] have created on earth," about which Peretz speaks, and the notion that "the life of the men, the beasts and the land seemed fixed in an inflexible circle," about which Silone speaks—these have been left behind. Neither heavenly nor mundane powers can long stop the lowly from speaking. For even to ask the question, What can we do?—even to recognize that the question must be put and repeated—is the beginning of an answer.

The World Beyond the Word

The Realistic Imagination: English Fiction from Frankenstein to Lady Chatterley

by George Levine

(The University of Chicago Press; $25)

In an essay contributed to the *Nineteenth Century* a few years before his death, Anthony Trollope remarked that the reading of novels can hardly strengthen the intelligence. Reading about them in George Levine's book will certainly exercise it. The mere title presages a semantic inquiry of considerable difficulty, since in modern colloquial English the words "realistic" and "realism" can be variously employed. Storekeepers endeavor to seduce us with the promise of realistic prices; we take a realistic view of our team's chances in a ball game; in a picture gallery we exclaim over the realism achieved on some Dutchman's *trompe l'oeil* canvas or, perhaps, by Annibale Carracci's doing abundant justice to the interior of a butcher's shop.

When we come to literature and have to consider these terms as they abound in criticism, a distracting difficulty emerges in the name of the morality of art. To be a realist is surely to describe faithfully things as they are, which one might judge laudable employment. However, such faithful description tends to be seen by some readers as reprehensible, since more often than not things as they are turn out too nasty to be swallowed neat, too offensive to the view unless given some "coloring of poetry"—it is a favorite phrase with Victorian reviewers—or clothed in a decent shift or breeches from the abundant wardrobe of the imagination.

Realism thus viewed was sometimes called naturalism, the new name, the *Daily News* told its readers in 1881, given by M. Zola to his own "unnecessarily faithful portrayal of offensive incidents." Naturalism, Charles Kingsley had declared some 20 years earlier, "threatened to end in sheer brutality." Kingsley, no doubt, was something of a philistine, and is not called into court by Professor Levine, who does, however, quote Henry James: "On what authority does [M. Zola] represent nature to us as a combination of the cesspool and the house of prostitution? On what authority does he represent foulness rather than fairness as the sign that we are to know her by?" It is evident that strong winds blew around the edifice of representative fiction in the latter part of the 19th century.

The bandying about of realism as a dyslogistic term annoyed many of the

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Victorian novelists. Levine quotes Hardy as calling it "an unfortunate, an ambiguous word, which has been taken up by literary society like a view-halloo," and Gissing as hoping that it might never again be used except in its proper sense by writers on scholastic philosophy. Levine himself has hard things to say about it. It is "dangerously multivalent," and its "sticky self-contradictions" become stickier as one perseveres with them. Nevertheless Levine does persevere, although in doing so he affronts those fashionable and formidable semiotic theories which deny to language any referential function whatever. His opening page, indeed, is "sticky" with new inkhorn terms deriving from this quarter, and throughout his book he cannot quite make do without a bunch of neologisms of similar provenance: "textuality," "narrativity," "fictionality," and the like. ("Protagonist" is a respectable old word, but there is surely something etymologically inordinate in the persuasion that a work of fiction can harbor two protagonists, and indeed even three.)

BUT tricky as the word "realism" may be, we are bound to feel that if it is to be considered useful within the sphere of literary criticism, let alone of literary theory, some working definition of it must be framed and tested. And such a definition we do find in the opening section of this book. Realism is "the representation of experience in a manner which approximates closely to description of similar experience in non-literary contexts of the same culture." But this definition, we learn, is drawn from David Lodge's *The Modes of Modern Writing*, and Levine, although he has a commendatory word for it, calls it "convenient and slippery" and adds that "the philosophical holes in [it] are large." It may be so, but the holes are not particularized, nor is any alternative candidate from the dictionary brought forward. His concern, Levine says, "is not with a definition of 'realism,' but with a study of its elusiveness." This is fair enough; the reader has been warned; here is not a book for a drowsy fireside. And what follows seems to me wholly admirable:

> No theory of the novel can stand that is not based firmly in a detailed consideration of what novelists actually did. A theory of realism, for instance, which fails to take into account the way particular novels radically change, in style and 'content,' the conventions of the past and present that realism is frequently said to affirm, can be no theory at all. The theory of this study is, thus, embedded in and inseparable from the exegeses of texts.

But if we are bidden to defer the attempt to articulate the theory of realism until we have adequately detected and analyzed it in practice, we can nevertheless, Levine asserts, be assured from the start of what it means. "With all the divergent possibilities of meaning, the word, in its literary application, carries a consistent thrust through all its inconsistent history . . . an attempt to use language to get beyond language, to discover some non-verbal truth out there." About this teleological, as we call it, aspect of the matter, Levine is confident and emphatic. Realism, he repeats almost immediately, goes out "in pursuit of the unattainable unmediated reality," and it is the continuing struggle involved that is to be the subject of his book. We are to be shown that there is regularly something dialectical about the development of realism in English prose fiction. What is initially realism hardens into convention upon which a new realism acts to some effect of synthesis. Realism is process, not a mode or genre.

It is in *Northanger Abbey*, Levine suggests, and particularly in its parodic element, that we may most readily discern "the instrument out of which . . . realism is born." For, "Parody is the dialectical inception—the new defined against a conception of the old—of a dialectical process, both in Austen and in the realists who follow." The first of these followers to be considered in substantial detail are Scott and Trollope, and here we may well feel that, so far as his thesis goes, Levine is traversing somewhat stony ground. It is not, on the face of it, easy to see how, say, *The Antiquary* and *Is He Popenjoy?* effectively illustrate any thrust toward that "unattainable unmediated reality." I am inclined to think that Scott and Trollope may be cited more cogently as marking stages in the development of realism in the least assuming sense of the word.

THUS, if we compare the deer hunt in *The Bride of Lammermoor* with almost any of the extended fox-hunting episodes that Trollope again and again describes in such detail, certain comparisons can be drawn at once. Scott is being realistic in that he is taking pains accurately to reconstruct, as he so often and so lovingly did, the habits of his fellow countrymen well before his own time, and certainly before the killing of deer became a matter of city gentlemen stalking them with a gun. But here realism falters. The hounds are Lord Bittlebrain's and so is the huntsman. Yet with the exception of the uncouth young laird, Hayston of Bucklaw, there are no gentry on the scene suddenly confronting the Master of Ravenswood apart from Sir William Ashton and his daughter Lucy. Since Sir William, the lord keeper of the Great Seal of Scotland, is an absorbed politician, and since he and Lucy quite lately have had a terrifying adventure with a bull, their presence by a wily design in the van of this gory business seems as improbable as the prompt thunderstorm which brings them, still concealing their identity, within the destitute ancestral castle of their hereditary enemy. Scott has simply glimpsed a means of killing two birds with one stone: achieving another of his antiquarian episodes and contriving a further contact between Ravenswood and, along with her father, the girl with whom he is going to fall in love. Even so, he can be detected as at a loss how to proceed. So he has to represent the Castle of Wolf's Crag (as indeed he already has done) unprovisioned to an extent merely grotesque, and thus to burden that splendidly drawn character Caleb Balderstone, Ravenswood's faithful old retainer, with far too long a turn at his sole activity of concealing the penury into which the Ravenswoods have declined. The occasion is as devoid of *vraisemblance* as it could be.

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In the typical Trollope fox hunt everything is plausible and almost everything is at work. There is significance in which ladies are in the saddle and which in the carriages. The techniques of the hunting field are faithfully presented, and so is its psychology as discriminating one man from another. The rider who is thrown and badly injured will have to make his slow recovery in the country house that is the home of the right girl. But all this does not mean that Trollope writes better novels than Scott. Scott is one of the greatest British novelists and Trollope is not—or not quite. What is involved is a matter of conscientious artistry. In point of the craft of fiction Trollope is serious—in a prosaic way as serious as Henry James himself. Scott's is a seriousness of the historical imagination.

BETWEEN Scott and Trollope stands Thackeray, to whom Levine accords even more space and refers more often than he does to these other two. The result is a very impressive critical performance indeed, and one hard to do justice to in summary. Like Jane Austen, Thackeray begins with parody, but unlike Jane Austen he remains "importantly parodic" to the end—seeking "to displace the delightful absurdities of literary conventions with the truths that lay beyond literature." The activity soon ceases to be in any degree lighthearted, since to take a straight look at realism is to see that it is no more real than romance. Thackeray's perception of this eventually leads him to much writing that is radically subversive of the conventions of the realistic novel. The fatigue and disillusion that more and more distinguish his art as it matures are the result of a sharp and penetrating awareness of something which close study of his contemporaries and immediate successors reveals as already in the air, even if vaguely and uncertainly: a persuasion that "our commonsense apprehension of reality and of the relation of language to that reality" fails to stand up to scrutiny.

Thackeray's levity is of complex origin, but is in its essence a "melancholy deprecation of the whole enterprise of fiction making and novel reading." When at the end of *The Newcomes* he says to his reader, "But for you, dear friend, it is as you like. You may settle your Fable-land in your own fashion. Anything you like happens in Fableland," he is in fact offering a wholly disenchanted view of the likelihood of finding truth through the pursuit of fiction. Nevertheless he can still be placed within the tradition of realism viewed as a dialectical process. With Thackeray we are within hail of "another stage of the history of the novel, profoundly informed by the realist impulse, yet no longer realism in the sense that the nineteenth-century novel might be seen as realistic."

At this stage stands Conrad and his "art of extremes that, in disrupting the conventions of the ordinary upon which the nineteenth-century realism built, remains at least consistent with the realist's need to point beyond literature, to locate a reality beyond the conventions of language." And here, too, stands finally D.H. Lawrence: "In his rejection of the conventions of realism, Lawrence belongs nevertheless to that great struggle of the realist's both to use and to reject literature and language, for the sake of a reality beyond language." Here, we may feel, the argument is thinning out a little, as if we are passing beyond the area of Professor Levine's concentrated regard. *Lady Chatterly's Lover* rejects realism only in the sense that it is largely absurd. If Lawrence ever comes—as I think he does come—to a near-transcendence of language it is perhaps in the evocation of bush and beach and ocean in *Kangaroo*.

There are occasional small typographical crumbles in this large book. In a note on page 330, and to a small effect of splendid absurdity, we are advised to consult a book by Harry Levin, "esp. pp. 43-38." On page 101 we are told of a passage in *Waverley* in which Scott is writing carelessly that "The works send out conventional signals to the reader, but seem as divorced from the action they purport to describe as Waverley is from the reality of his situation." When we emend "works" to "words" what we arrive at is a good example of the concise force of Professor Levine's writing.

J.I.M. Stewart

J.I.M. Stewart is the author of *Eight Modern Writers* (Oxford), among many other books.

The Quisling and the Sheikh

The World Challenge: OPEC and the New World Order by Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber

(Simon & Schuster; $14.95)

This book begins in characteristically portentous fashion with an exclusive account of a meeting of OPEC oil ministers in the small Saudi Arabian town of Taif. "It was in Taif that the Prophet gathered the small group of followers who, under his control, changed the face of the world by venturing to spread the word of Islam by the sword," writes Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber. "And it is now from quiet, secluded Taif that a revolution in world power is about to be launched—once again led by the Arabs of Islam." The opening chapter, setting the tone for the rest of this diatribe, bristles with threats and bombast. "The Taif Report aims for nothing less than a new alliance between the Arabs and the peoples of the Third World against their traditional exploiters, the industrialized West," writes the author. "Those leaders who dismiss it as mere Third World rhetoric are in for a shock."

As anyone who reads the newspapers can tell you, this isn't the best time to be issuing ultimatums on behalf of the oil cartel. OPEC has all it can do to keep oil prices from nose-diving without worrying about solidarity with the third world. It is Servan-Schreiber's misfortune to have declared boldly that OPEC will make sure that the "price [of oil] will double again before 1985" at a time when OPEC seemed invincible, only to have his declaration published when OPEC is being battered by an oil glut spawned by its own high prices. In the wake of price cuts by several major oil-producing nations (including traditional OPEC hawks like Nigeria), *Business Week* recently reported that "oil company planners, energy economists in the US and elsewhere, and even some OPEC officials are predicting steady—or possibly declining—world oil prices for the rest of this year and only a

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minimal increase at best in 1982 and the years beyond." This is what Servan-Schreiber gets for listening to OPEC.

If the West is in danger of economic war with OPEC and the third world, then Servan-Schreiber is our first quisling. His book is unvarnished OPEC propaganda, as his publisher emphasizes. "Servan-Schreiber has for years been an intimate of Sheikh Yamani," boasts the jacket copy on the uncorrected proofs sent to reviewers. "In the past two years Servan-Schreiber has been taken into the confidences of Yamani and the OPEC oil ministers as they planned to make an ultimatum to the West." (On the dust jacket of the final published book, the publisher discreetly avoids any mention of this intimate friendship, perhaps out of fear that jingoistic Americans might find it offensive.) Nothing but his apparent access to Yamani qualifies him to write on the subjects discussed in *The World Challenge*, which is pristinely unmarred by the slightest understanding of oil economics, the causes of third world poverty, or the sources of material progress.

Yamani chose his sycophant well, assuring himself a fawning portrait as the "brilliant strategist" who brought the West to its knees. Like every Arab leader, however, he must also be depicted as an unspoiled child of the desert:

> Here at Taif he is much different from his public image, from the elegant Westernized figure facing a battery of cameras and microphones as he moves from a powerful limousine to the entrance of a palace. . . . No, this evening he is at home. In a silk robe, his head covered and discreetly gilded slippers on his feet, he is at peace, as though he has returned to his roots. He can talk to his friends with enjoyment; he doesn't have to weigh his words or display the toughness he is known for in negotiations; he can be natural and genuinely amiable. Yamani detests passion and has never known hatred, at any rate, never at Taif, so near Mecca, the city of his birth, which can be seen from the bottom of the valley, at the end of the highway that winds its way to Jedda.

When Servan-Schreiber is not singing hymns to this savior of the Arabs, he is trying to make the West tremble at the mere mention of OPEC. Here his talent for melodrama comes in handy. Quoting the 1979 pledge of Venezuela's Humberto Calderon-Berti, then president of OPEC, that it would be "the most powerful weapon ever placed at the disposal of the Third World," Servan-Schreiber mutters ominously, "No one listened at the time. No one is listening now." (Never mind that people wouldn't be yawning if OPEC had kept its past promises.) Another chapter concludes thus:

> Our world is on the edge of disintegration. No one knows what to do to help it regain the collective life force that has left it. The past no longer furnishes us with what we need for the future. We must create our own possibilities of a rebirth—our own future.

When Servan-Schreiber speaks, the kettledrums always boom in accompaniment.

Servan-Schreiber has gotten some attention in the American press for his purported discovery that both Washington and Tel Aviv knew of Egyptian plans to attack Israel in 1973. Henry Kissinger, he says, forbade the Israelis from striking first so that the Arab states wouldn't be able to blame the ensuing war on Israel, as they did in 1967. This is not a new story, but it has never been substantiated before. It isn't substantiated here either.

ON THE SUBJECT of the third world, the author knows very little, and much of what he knows isn't true. This blend of ignorance and credulity gets him into frequent trouble. Now that OPEC is struggling to remain intact, the promise of an alliance with the third world surely will be forgotten. But one should have been skeptical even before. It would come as a great shock if the Arabs this time were serious about aiding poor nations. Certainly nothing the West did in its decades of colonial rule retarded the third world's economic advancement as much as OPEC's extortion. No doubt the cartel has its share of admirers among the governing elites of the poor nations, who would like to duplicate its dragon-slaying. It also enjoys plenty of deferential supplicants anxious to obtain mercy in the form of economic aid. But given the withering effects of high oil prices on the economic growth of third world countries, their citizens can hardly rejoice at OPEC's existence.

The author trots out the usual statistics—for example, noting that per capita income in India is only $200 per year, compared with $10,000 in the US. Servan-Schreiber apparently doesn't realize, or else doesn't want his reader to know, that such figures tell very little about the relative living standards of the two countries. These statistics imply that the typical Indian must make do on the equivalent of what an American could buy for $200 a year—as if anyone could survive on such meager ration. Most Indians are poor, but not that poor. Their cash income is low because the vast majority operate outside the cash economy, relying on traditional forms of barter and subsistence farming. In any case, information on incomes in relatively undeveloped countries is notoriously unreliable.

Servan-Schreiber approvingly paraphrases former World Bank president Robert McNamara to the effect that if the "rich nations did not fill the gap between the prosperous northern half of the planet and the starving southern hemisphere, no one would be safe in the long run." This perpetuates the false stereotype of the entire third world as a stagnant pool of poverty. How can one justify lumping South Korea and Brazil together with Uganda and Bolivia? Our minstrel employs the stereotype so that he can offer global redistribution and centralized economies as the keys to third world progress. Examining his subject more closely would require him to acknowledge both the unencouraging results of past economic aid and the generally superior performances of market-oriented economies. India, for example, has remained one of the poorest nations in the world despite massive aid from both the West and the Soviets. By contrast, Pinochet's Chile has achieved extraordinary economic progress (growth now approaches eight percent per year) despite being spurned by nearly the entire world community.

Clearly North-South redistribution has not been the solution to poverty in either India or Chile. Other factors are much more important. Foreign aid, as British economist P. T. Bauer has written:

> cannot . . . promote development if the population at large is not interested in material advance, nor if it is strongly attached to values and customs incompatible with material progress . . . . If all conditions for development other than capital are present, capital will soon be generated locally, or will be available to the government or to private businesses on commercial terms from abroad. . . . If, however, the conditions for development are not present, then aid—which in these circumstances will be the only source of external capital—will be necessarily unproductive and ineffective.

Servan-Schreiber obviously has no idea where material wealth comes from.

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He claims, for instance, that the obstacle of illiteracy in poor nations can be removed in one stroke by computers that can converse with people. "On the new frontier of the computerized universe," he proclaims, "the acquisition of concrete knowledge and professional information need no longer be dependent upon reading and writing."

Well, if you can believe that, then you can probably believe that Sheikh Yamani is the third world's kindly uncle, or (my favorite) that Indira Gandhi is an "austere beauty" of "courage" and "modesty." This gentle flower, some readers may recall, is the same Indira who closed down opposition newspapers, imprisoned political enemies, and forcibly sterilized at least two million Indians after establishing herself as a virtual dictator in 1975. And if you can believe those portrayals, then you can probably believe that *The World Challenge* is, as Simon & Schuster claims, "our *last chance* for survival" and "the most important book of the 1980s."

Stephen Chapman

Stephen Chapman is an editorial writer and columnist for the *Chicago Tribune*.

Man of Myriad Minds

Voltaire: A Biography by Haydn Mason

(The Johns Hopkins University Press; $14.95)

Voltaire has had many lives, and there have been many lives of Voltaire. It could not be otherwise: his face—that narrow, supremely intelligent face with its speaking eyes and toothless grin—has haunted, and in many ways puzzled, two centuries of readers. So has his variety. Poet, dramatist, historian, critic, editor, short story writer, political and religious polemicist, popularizer of science, humanitarian, wit—above all, wit—and self-appointed but undisputed gadfly of fanatics, bigots, and persecutors, he wrote better and thought better than most of his biographers ever could. The best parts in the lives of Voltaire were usually the quotations. With his causes, his passions, his confidence, and, yes, his prejudices, Voltaire was necessarily highly controversial: he made disciples and enemies, and has continued to do so since his death in 1778. Inevitably, he has spawned a scholarly and belletristic industry that has been at work since the 1820s, turning out reminiscences, monographs, editions, collected works—and biographies. This means that a biographer of Voltaire entering the field today must cope with a mass of printed material even more daunting than Voltaire's own immense output. Such a biographer must be a brave and a diligent scholar.

Haydn Mason is both. As editor of that scholarly compendium, the *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, and as a well-equipped student of both the man and the age, he is the right person for the job. If his success is incomplete, I find it hard to imagine the writer who would wholly succeed. To do Voltaire justice one might almost have to be Voltaire.

For many years, the enormous eight-volume *Life of Voltaire* by Gustave Desnoiresterres, published in the 1860s and 1870s, was the standard account. It left out very little—very little of what was available when Desnoiresterres wrote. But since then, especially from the 1930s on, the already overwhelming corpus of Voltaire's writings was enlarged further with the discovery of his love letters to his niece—possibly the best-kept secret of the 18th century—and the definitive editions of his notebooks and correspondence by Theodore Besterman. Understandably, Besterman, who knew as much about Voltaire as anyone has ever known, not excepting French scholars, tried his hand at a full-scale one-volume *Life of Voltaire*, more than three times as long as the book under review. Published in 1968, it aroused and disappointed great expectations. Besterman was an indefatigable and demanding editor, but not a historian of ideas, and so his particular interests and peculiar judgments swamped his exhaustive account. His book rested securely on research that the author himself had undertaken, or had done much to inspire, but it was a failure as a biography. If Voltaire could escape even Besterman, who could catch him?

It is against the background of this rather despairing question, and of the overwhelming bulk of recent scholarly editing and unsatisfactory syntheses, that we must read Mason's effort. It is as distinguished a performance as we have any right to expect, considering Mason's determination to keep his book short. Economy has its virtues: clearly presented and reasonably argued, Mason's biography concentrates on the high points of Voltaire's busy existence, following him from Paris to London to Cirey to Berlin to Geneva to Ferney. Traditional biographers have done the same—the ordering of Mason's material is chronological—but they have rarely adopted what I should call his search-light technique. The chapter on Geneva, for example, concentrates on Voltaire's *Candide*, probably his most famous work. There is one editorial decision Mason has taken which is debatable but original: he has spent more space on the aged Voltaire, the patriarch of Ferney, than on any other part of his life. It is the old man of the Houdon statue on whom Mason concentrates.

SINCE Mason presents the sequence of events smoothly, and since his verdicts on individual matters strike me as often fresh but never eccentric, his policy is defensible enough. Besides, Mason's *Voltaire* is easy to read; his prose is workmanlike, free of embarrassing conceits, if scarcely stylish. Mason is no Voltaire, but then who is? Still, while I can recommend this biography with confidence to anyone not steeped in Voltaire—Mason's control of his material is complete—I can only deplore this choice of terseness. Voltaire, I said, led many lives, and Mason presents too many of them, necessarily, in the most sketchy manner. Voltaire's political thought and activities, around which he organized much of his life; his historical writings, pioneering in their secular view of causation and the relevance of social forces to the historical process; his tragedies, now largely forgotten, but in his day the most solid support of his fame, make their appearance in their proper places and Mason bestows on each a judicious comment or two. But they are sprinkled across Voltaire's life rather than presented as occasions for sustained discussion. The specter of excessive compression haunts

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these pages from the beginning. Here is the first paragraph in the book in its entirety:

> Voltaire, (né François-Marie Arouet) was born, in all probability, in Paris on 21 November 1694. Was he a vigorous baby in his mother's womb, as one might be tempted to expect of someone who was to display such abundance of energy all his life? The question is only slightly more otiose than attempts to psychoanalyze Voltaire, and the evidence is almost as meagre. Information on his early childhood is almost non-existent. We may speculate on the early death of his mother—who according to a cousin had a difficult time at his birth and whom Voltaire represents as being of fragile health ([c. February 1729], D344)—when he was just seven years old and on the gap which it left in his life, but there is little of direct significance to go on. He scarcely ever refers to her, and in his writings there appears to be none of that mother-absence which plays a part in, for instance, Prevost's works. It is however possible to discern, and we shall see later, an emotional deprivation in his make-up which may be related to the loss of his mother when very young, but at best the link must remain speculative.

There is much to be said about this paragraph. It is efficient, with the number of the Voltaire letter that proves Mason's point right in the text (a habit that saves time and space, perhaps, but does not make for elegance), with some tantalizing questions raised and discussed (and in part dismissed as unanswerable), with several necessary and precise facts conveyed (the probable date of Voltaire's birth), and all the available information cautiously assessed (with psychoanalysis and other similar speculations firmly put in their place). But the paragraph is breathless, as if Mason had wanted to distill the essence of Voltaire, or had written a very full outline and then published it instead of writing the biography.

This kind of self-abnegation is not the only refusal that marks this opening paragraph: it may be true enough that we are relatively ignorant of Voltaire's early life and are therefore compelled to speculate about his development and his character. But—as Mason himself intimates—we know much more about Voltaire than this cautious marshaling of the evident facts seems to allow: we know, for example, that he liked to think he was not his parent's child, but had a rather more glorious ancestry than the baptismal record would indicate. This, the psychoanalyst could have told him, is a characteristic symptom for many individuals, particularly, it would seem, gifted ones; it is a fine specimen of the "family romance," with which Ludwig van Beethoven—to name only one—toyed all his life. Inside this slim volume, then, there is the making of a fat book crying to be let out, a life that would do justice to all of Voltaire's copious existence. I can only wish that Mason had paid heed to that cry.

Peter Gay

Peter Gay is the Durfee Professor of History at Yale University.

Muddle in the Courts

The Child Savers: Juvenile Justice Observed by Peter S. Prescott

(Alfred A. Knopf; $12.95)

Muddled and problematic though America's juvenile justice system may be, it does offer a few crystalline ironies. And foremost among these would surely be that the system *is* such a muddle. The long-standing chaos of our criminal system for adults is only to be expected, for that system has never had a clearly established purpose, but instead an uneasy amalgamation of aims which include rehabilitation, prevention, and punishment. These three often-conflicting goals suffuse the whole adult criminal system, creating an irresolution of purpose that simultaneously obscures and empowers the inconsistencies which prevail there. By contrast, the juvenile system's purpose is almost universally agreed upon: the "best interests of the child" must be served. While it is true that this criterion is a banner vague enough for both those advocating extreme leniency and severe physical punishment to march contentedly under, even those in the latter group customarily justify such punishment in terms of the child's best interests ("What that boy *needs* is a good thrashing.") The desire to punish for punishment's sake, a societal thirst for retribution, is not only less frequently voiced in attitudes toward juveniles, but less prevalent as well.

Peter S. Prescott, in the introduction to his new book about juvenile justice, *The Child Savers: Juvenile Justice Observed*, outlines his own aims quite clearly. He does not intend to draft any blueprint for reform or to pilot us through any "touristy" journey over the whole national system. He seeks only to illuminate "the process of justice as it is applied (or misapplied) to children" by observing the goings on inside a single court. New York City's Family Court was Prescott's choice, and after attending classes in juvenile law at night (Mr. Prescott is not a lawyer, but a senior writer and book critic at *Newsweek*), he began viewing and interviewing there four or five years ago. Prescott has done a commendable job of gathering the distinct outlooks of the lawyers, policemen, judges, probation officers, case workers, court officials, and legal reformers who operate within and upon the juvenile justice system. Although there's necessarily a good deal of overlap, each of his book's chapters covers a discrete aspect of juvenile justice. Some of these aspects are presented more clearly than others.

His lucid chapter on the evolution of juvenile law conveys both the dire need for various procedural protections under the old system (in 1967 the Supreme Court in a five-to-four decision, *In re Gault*, revolutionized juvenile law by extending many such procedural guarantees to children) and the disillusionment and retrogression which any formal recognition of this need represents; there was a time when the law regarded the juvenile court as the child's "friend." The *Gault* decision, while professing otherwise ("Nothing will require that the conception of the kindly juvenile judge be replaced by its opposite"), was an admission that the supposedly "friendly" relationship between a powerful, autonomous court and an often violent and dangerous juvenile was in fact necessarily antagonistic. Prescott's chapter on child abuse and neglect captures—chiefly through the portrayal of a nine-year-old boy whose parents, pitifully weeping their love for him in court, had beaten him and apparently

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taken a burning newspaper to his genitals—some of the multi-leveled horror that the court must routinely catalog and assimilate.

Prescott is also useful in showing the sorts of "extralegal" law an attorney in juvenile court frequently practices. Because of understaffing and incompetence in the various social services connected with the court, as well as the links of sympathy and affection a lawyer often develops toward his juvenile client, the aid he provides often is really that of a social worker, not a lawyer. His efforts alone will sometimes determine whether the child receives the educational assistance, residential placement, or psychiatric care he requires.

A BOOK'S shortcomings commonly come in two varieties—the surprising and the non-surprising. For example, it is unfortunate but not surprising that Prescott's explication of the court's labyrinthine organization and procedure is not wholly successful. In order to make this lesson in procedure "less formidable," Prescott arranged it around the case of a 15-year-old boy charged with the knifing murder of a 24-year-old junkie. The murder case itself is engrossing, but the reader is apt to find himself—much as juveniles funneled through the court often find themselves—ultimately bewildered as to what's happened and why. A few charts would have been helpful. Nor is it surprising, given the disparate nature of his material, that Prescott's text fails to undergo that mysterious literary bonding by which separate chapters fuse into a single, integrated book.

Yet it is surprising that Prescott has succumbed to a lawyer's occupational danger of employing opaque legal terminology in writing for the lay public. Legal terms are most confusing when they also carry everyday, non-legal connotations; a reader coming upon a phrase like "habeus corpus" or "ancillary jurisdiction" is immediately warned that he has stumbled into that congested neighborhood in which lawyers serve as paid guides, but he is apt to feel that he knows perfectly well the meaning of "disposition" or "equity" or "stay." Prescott's text constantly presumes that the reader has some familiarity with both the jargon and procedure of the family court. Also surprising is that Prescott, an accomplished professional reviewer, would employ a number of sloppy constructions and redundancies ("grizzled graying hair") or would lapse at times into such fatigued locutions ("The discussion having reached the sandbox level, Levy tries a final stab"). And it's surprising that in a book often dealing with the problems of hearsay evidence Prescott would offer, as support for his postulate of a recent upsurge in racism, a comment (" . . . are you sure they weren't better off under slavery?") from someone identified only as "a suburban matron." Surely, an enterprising author could locate "a suburban matron" (or—Prescott's confirming source of the rise in racism—"a prominent member of the New York community") who would say anything about anything. This sort of evidence of course proves nothing about racism; it is probative only in that courtroom in which the skeptical reader judges the author's methods.

A further irony of the juvenile justice system also derives from the court's clear purpose. Because everyone employed within it is working toward the "child's best interests," anyone opposing those efforts (an opposition effectively guaranteed by our adversary system) must therefore be working against the child. Prescott ably illustrates how distrust and lack of collaboration render so ungainly the movements of what are supposed to be the court's coordinate arms. The dilatory nature of American justice is here at its most baleful: a one-year lag in the case of a ten-year-old is proportionately far longer, and more destructive, than an identical lag for a man of 30. This sense of a deadlocked adversary system, combat gone sour, makes the juvenile court a bleak and depressing place for anyone—judges, lawyers, probation officers—to work. Yet its bleakness extends far beyond this.

SINCE Prescott opens his book with a quotation from a sonnet of Auden's, it may be fitting to close with another Auden sonnet snippet, this one about anonymous beings so overburdened by pain that there's little room in their lives for anything else:

> They are and suffer; that is all they do.
> A bandage hides the place where each is living . . .

Streams of such people, adolescents and children and infants, some of their problems inevitable and some the result of society's indifference, eddy in and out of the juvenile justice system. The court offers a daily, deadening reminder of lives going irreversibly to waste: children who cannot read properly and probably will never read properly; who are damaged and will always be damaged; muddled, and always muddled.

Bradley Leithauser

Bradley Leithauser works at the Kyoto Comparative Law Center. His book of poems, *Hundreds of Fireflies*, will be published by Knopf next January.

Correspondence, *from page 7*

Stalin. But were those who believed in a beneficent and all-powerful God better prepared? And, finally, I wonder if "man's capacity for evil," not only under Stalin and Hitler, but as we see it now in the USSR, Argentina, Iran, Cambodia, etc., is evidence of the "dangers of absolute freedom" or of the dangers of absolute obedience?

Lawrence W. Hyman
Brooklyn College, CUNY
Brooklyn, New York

Felicitations

To the editors:
I've just read Michael Walzer's piece, "Totalitarianism vs. Authoritarianism" (*TNR*, July 4 & 11). It is exactly the article I've been hoping would soon appear. It is the most persuasive, explicit rebuttal to the flawed case being made by people who should know better. I intend to promote the piece among my associates.

Congratulations!

Hyman Bookbinder
American Jewish Committee
Washington, DC

Tous les deux

To the editors:
I especially enjoyed your cartoon (by Vint Lawrence, *TNR*, June 6) of Jimmy Carter trying to get his saddle over Joe Califano sticking out the animal's rear end. But is the inference that Califano was a burr under Jimmy's saddle? Or a horse's ass?

Bob Kuttner
Working Papers
Cambridge, Massachusetts

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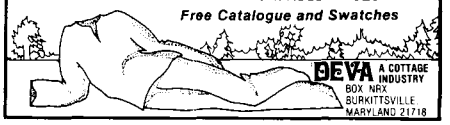
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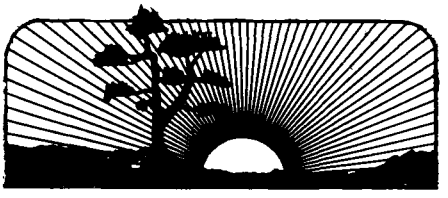

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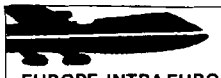

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Washington Diarist

Hardball

If property is theft, as Proudhon used to say, then the Reagan tax plan is just legalized looting—a big, well-mannered, upscale suburban riot. The president and his pals have tossed a few bricks through the windows of the federal treasury. There's glass all over the sidewalk, and now the real fun begins. Roving bands of wealthy, middle-aged Caucasians will now lug away the TV sets and stereos under the indulgent gaze of the revenue cops. These tax rioters—unhinged by a frantic desire to invest, baby, invest—are sending a message: after 40 years of fiscal oppression, the well-to-do want a piece of the action. They're rich and they're beautiful, and they are. . .somebody!

Reagan's TV tax speech was an impressive piece of work. Knowing that I used to write speeches for Jimmy Carter, friends are often kind enough to suggest that Reagan's prowess as a "communicator" is wholly a matter of delivery. I don't think so. Of course Reagan's delivery is good, but so what? He used to be an actor—still is, in fact, since the skills of the acting trade, unlike those of haberdashery or peanut farming, are directly transferable to politics. An actor, by definition, is a professional liar. He pretends to be a cowboy or a professor or a gangster (Reagan has played all of these), when in truth he is nothing of the kind. People are well aware that Reagan knows how to emote on cue, and I think they are intelligent enough to discount the excellence of his delivery accordingly. So it's not just how the man says it, it's what he says. As it happens, I didn't see the Reagan tax speech on television. I assume he belted it out with his usual crinkly sincerity, though for all I know he may have recited it in a lifeless monotone. But I did read the text in the paper the next day, and, as an ex-speechwriter, I was impressed.

Like many Reagan speeches, this one contained no memorable lines, unless you count the Will Rogers paraphrase about some people never having met a tax they didn't hike—hardly the sort of stuff that gets engraved in marble. But it was well and cleanly written. It performed the remarkable feat of discussing an inherently dull and technical subject without getting bogged down in jargon or statistics. It had the narrative drive of sustained argument and the dramatic tension of conflict between "us" (the "bipartisan bill") and "them." The appeal for public pressure on Congress was especially effective—"I ask you now to put aside any feelings of frustration or helplessness about our political institutions and join me in this dramatic but responsible plan. . ."—not least because of its skillful recognition of what Jimmy Carter once called the crisis of confidence.

Reagan put his case most crudely, yet most subtly, when he told a little story about a representative who was explaining his reservations about the president's plan to a constituent. Reagan: "The constituent, a farmer, listened politely until he'd finished and then said, 'Don't give me an essay. What I want to know is are you for 'em or agin 'em?'" This was a phonetically interesting sentence. There was no antecedent for the "'em," but it seemed, in the printed text, to be referring to the provisions of the president's plan. When spoken aloud, however, "for 'em or agin 'em" is indistinguishable from "for 'im or agin 'im." Thus the issue was transformed, by means of a homophone, from support of a debatably popular plan to support of an indisputably popular president.

A few hours after the big vote on the House floor, a score of tribunes of the people suited up and hied themselves to Four Mile Run Park, home of the Alexandria Dukes of the Class A Carolina League, for the annual congressional game. After the unedifying events of the afternoon, it was a pleasure to witness a partisan contest whose result was not a foregone conclusion. (I'll spare you the patriotic homilies about how wonderful it is to see high government officials earnestly playing baseball, but the fact is that this is the sort of thing that could happen only in America. Or possibly Japan. Or Cuba.) This was not softball, mind you, but a real baseball game, with a hardball pitched overhand and 90-foot basepaths. The Democratic team included Tom Downey of New York, Toby Moffett of Connecticut, and the hometown favorite, Walter Fauntroy of the District of Columbia. The Republicans had Pete McCloskey of California, Senator William Cohen of Maine, and, on the mound, the egregious John LeBoutillier, the one-term (with any luck) representative from New York. Politics intruded in the fifth inning, when the Democrats accused the Republicans of fiddling with their lineup. While the legislators argued, the Democratic bleachers, sensing scandal, took up the chant: "Wa-ter-gate! Wa-ter-gate!" This general theme continued for the rest of the game. "Ag-new Cash! Ag-new Cash!" chanted the Democratic fans. And "Di-ta Beard! Di-ta Beard!" And "Nix-on Tapes! Nix-on Tapes!" And, finally, "Pakistan Tilt! Pakistan Tilt!" The Dems needed the comfort of these reminders of a happier time, because they were behind in what was turning out to be, strangely enough, a legitimately exciting ball game. The Democrats went into their last at-bats with a two-run deficit. They quickly loaded the bases. Up to the plate stepped David Bonior of Michigan, who is that rarest of Reagan-era Democrats, a liberal with a beard. Bonior hit one on the ground in the general direction of third base. The ball vanished in a cloud of dust, and by the time it reappeared the game was tied. One of the base runners, David McCurdy of Oklahoma, who had voted with the Republicans on the tax bill, was so anxious to refurbish his partisan credentials that he knocked the catcher sprawling as he scored the tying run. (Grizzled fans were reminded of the performance of another party irregular, Eugene McCarthy, who tied the 1957 game with a slide into home that dislocated the shoulder of the Republican catcher, Tom Curtis of Missouri.) For a moment it looked as if the Democrats might actually win. Alas, it was not to be. The umpire decreed that Bonior's hit had gone foul. The runners trudged back to their bases, Bonior went from hero to goat by hitting into a double play on the next pitch, and one out later it was all over. The Republicans had won, six to four. For the Democrats, it was their second loss of the day, but at least this time they went down to honorable defeat. Wait till next year.

H.H.

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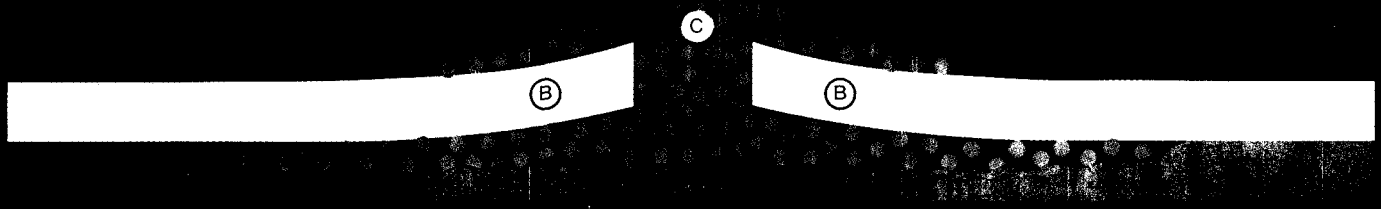
Consumer Orientation
No. 11 in a Series
Subject: Longlife Design.
The Antithesis of
Planned Obsolescence

Porsche 911



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Our goal of the longlife car has shown, however, that components such as the engine and drive train can have a far longer life span than the body. Road salt, acid rain, and other aggressive airborne matter have created increasing demands on the body's protective coating. Now more than ever, there is the danger of rust.

Paint alone is no protection against rust. (See diagram above.) Harmful elements can attack a car's sheet steel (A) through pinholes in the paint skin (B). Unchecked, rust (C) can expand, mar the finish, and weaken an ordinary steel body. So in addition to a 4-step paint process, the Porsche 911—like all Porsches—is protected by a hot dip galvanizing process.

All of the sheet steel used in all Porsches is hot dip galvanized—on both sides—in a 500°C liquid zinc bath. This produces (see diagram below) a protective zinc coating (D) on the sheet steel (E) that actually *grows* into the damaged portion (F) of the paint skin (G)—plugging pinholes and preventing further corrosion.

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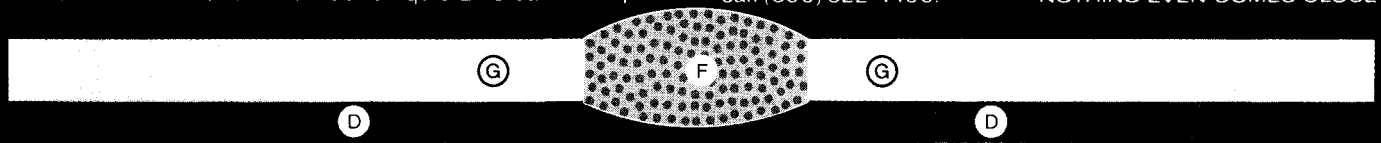

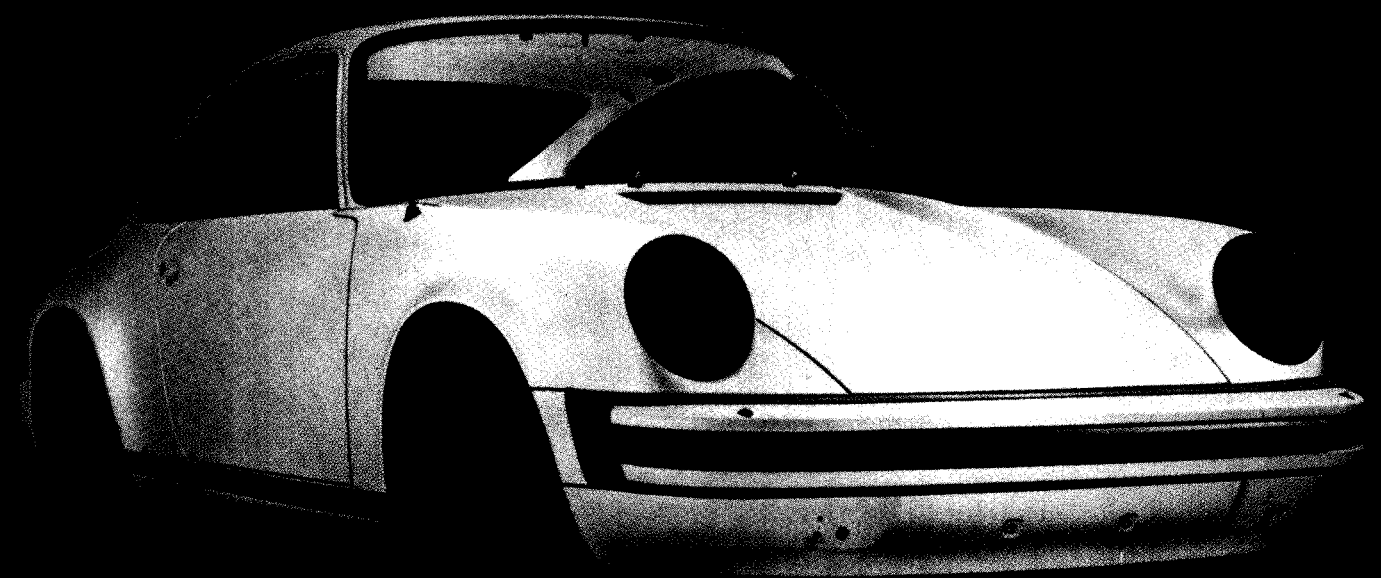

At the Porsche Research and Development Center (Entwicklungzentrum) in Weissach, the steel body of a Porsche 911 has been standing outside in the elements—protected only by hot dip galvanizing—for 7 years. To date, there has not been one speck of red rust.

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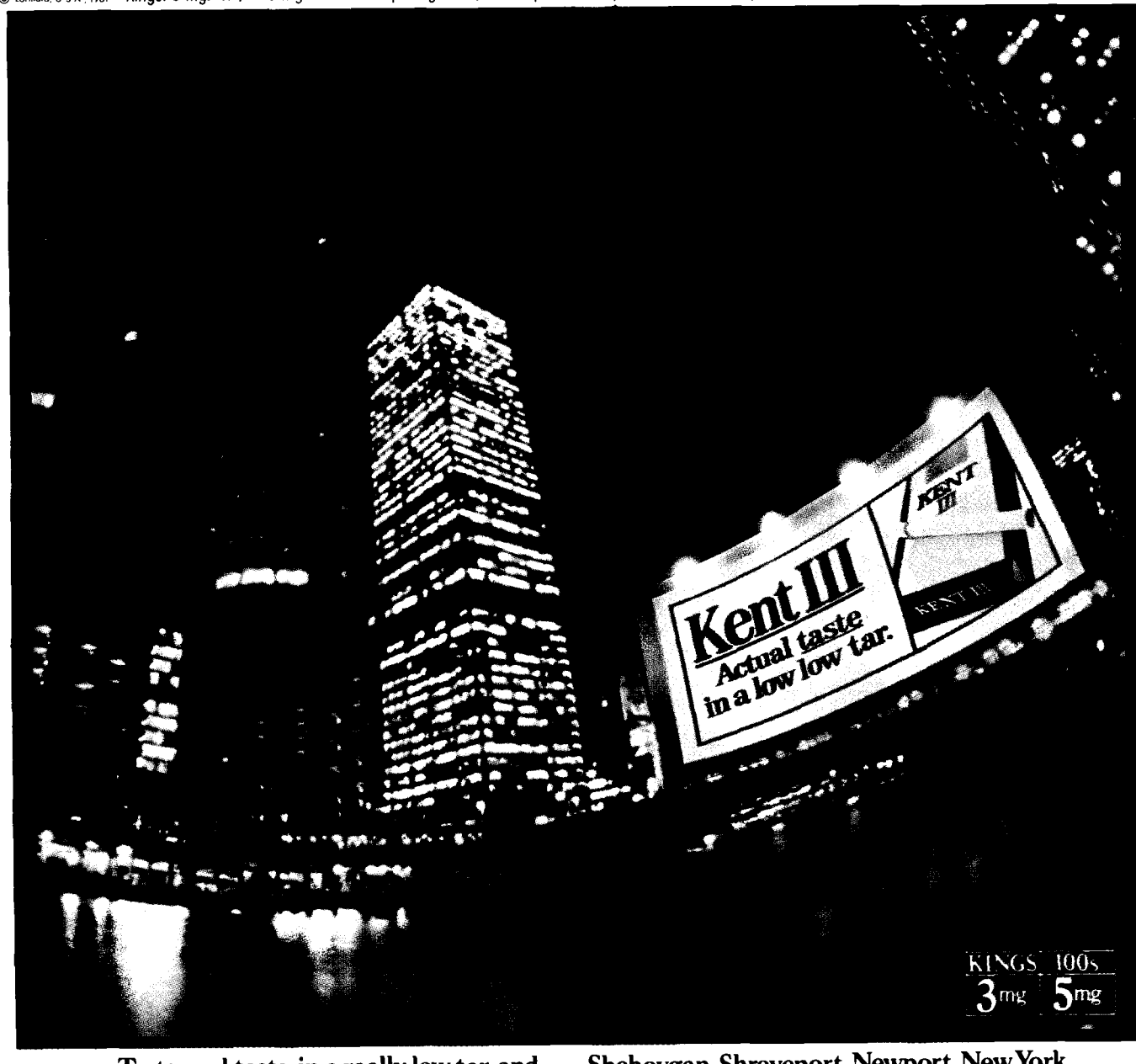

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